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THE GATEWAY

www.thegatewayonline.ca

thursday, january 11, 2011
volume CI number 25

Published since november 21, 1910
Circulation 10,000
ISSN 0845-356X

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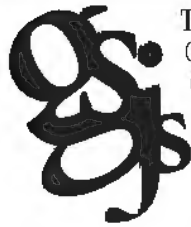
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THE GATEWAY is published by the Gateway Student Journalism Society (GSJS), a student-run, autonomous, apolitical not-for-profit organization, operated in accordance with the Societies Act of Alberta.

THE GATEWAY is proud to be a founding member of the Canadian University Press.



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The Gateway periodically adjusts its circulation between 8,000 to 10,000 printed copies based on market fluctuations and other determining factors.

colophon

The Gateway is created using Macintosh computers, HP Scanjet flatbed scanners, and a Nikon Super Cool Scan optical film scanner. Adobe InDesign is used for layout. Adobe Illustrator is used for vector images, while Adobe Photoshop is used for raster images. Adobe Acrobat is used to create PDF files which are burned directly to plates to be mounted on the printing press. Text is set in a variety of sizes, styles, and weights of FENICE, Joanna, Kepler and Whitney. The *Manitoban* is *The Gateway's* sister paper, and we love her dearly, though "not in that way." *The Gateway's* games of choice are *Chime* and *The Incident*.

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Cover Illustration by Anthony Goertz



DAN MCKECHNIE

BACK TO THE LINES U of A students wait in line at the Bookstore as part of the beginning-of-semester ritual of buying new textbooks.

STREETERS

Compiled and photographed by
Scott Fenwick and Dan McKechnie

As you may be aware, the university is switching over from Webmail to Gmail by the end of the month. Why will you be glad to see Webmail go?



Brady Olsen
Science I



Ian Zackodnik
Science I



Kat Villeneuve
ALES III



Brent Volk
Engineering I

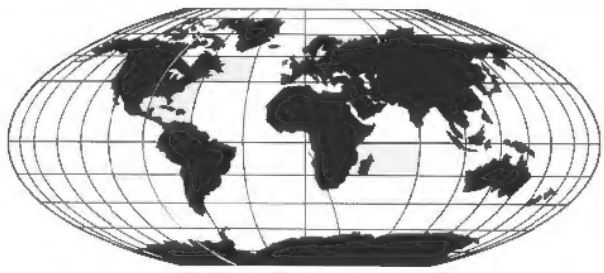
I think that Webmail can be just a little less efficient. Gmail is set up very nicely and I think that will be a much more effective way for the students to be able to communicate with their profs and with each other, as opposed to Webmail, which doesn't quite as efficiently.

I can't get it on my phone. That's about it. With Gmail, you can get it on your phone and it's easier.

It will look cooler, I guess. That's about it. I don't know, I like Webmail, to be quite honest. I don't have a problem with it. So besides efficiency, I don't really know why they're getting rid of it.

Because Gmail has a large capacity [with] lots of gigabytes. Seriously though, I've used Gmail [and] you get large email-attachment sending capabilities. Gmail is Google. Google is awesome.

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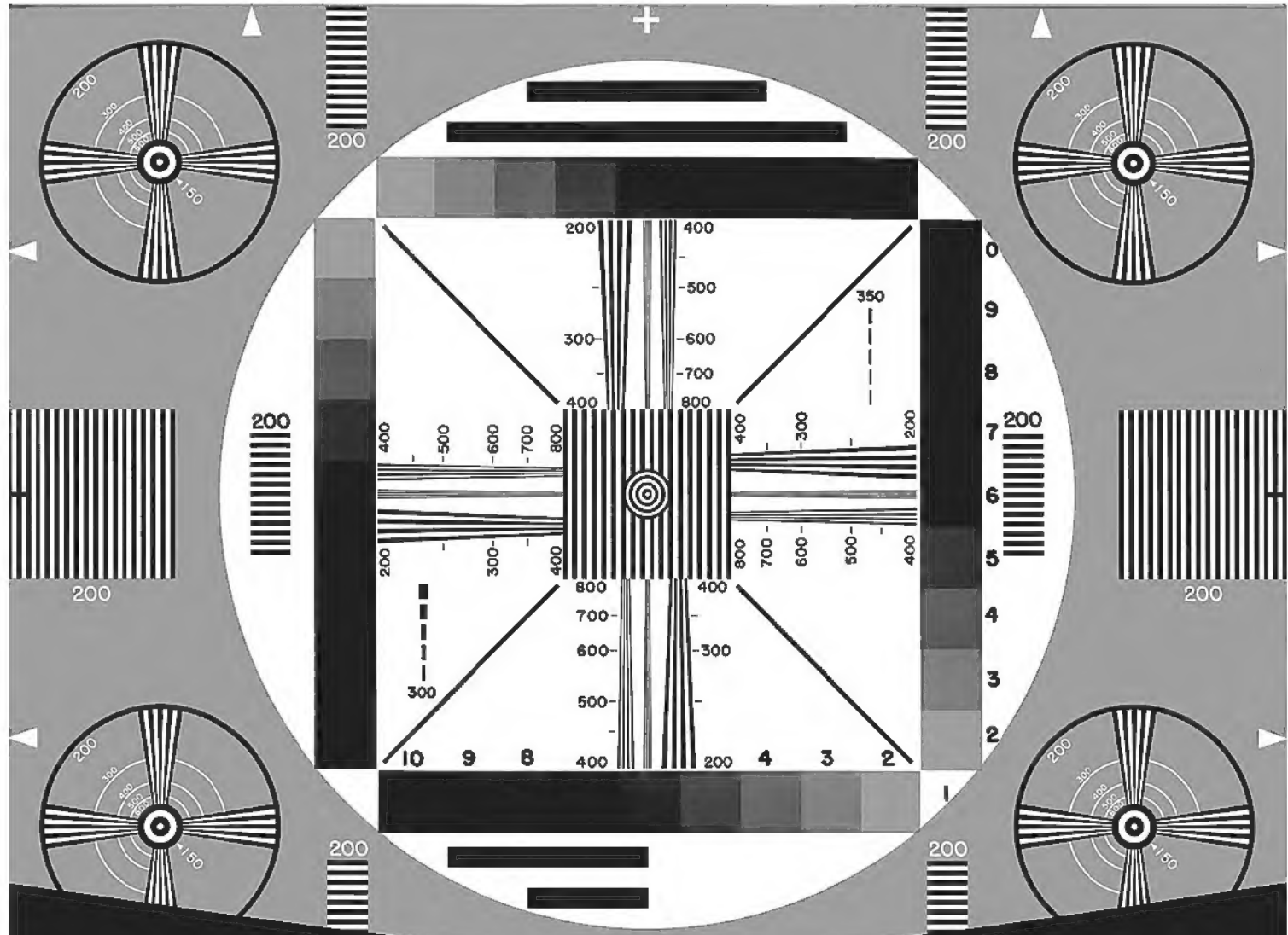
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Do you love technology more than you should? As in "banned from Future Shop for life" kind of love? Then keep an eye out for "Technical Difficulties," the Gateway's tech blog written by Mark Gudim and Jordan Ching debuting next week.

Math prof asked to resign after grade battle with department

ALEXANDRIA ELDRIDGE
Senior News Editor

A University of Alberta math professor has been asked to resign after he spoke out against a decision by the Mathematical and Statistical Sciences Department to lower his students' grades without his approval.

Mikhail Kovalyov taught a Math 115 class during the Winter 2010 term. Kovalyov originally assigned the grades with a mean grade point average of 2.16, of which 22 per cent of students received failing grades. The department lowered the mean grade point average to 1.79 in May 2010, according to emails obtained by *The Gateway*.

Kovalyov explained that he assigned his grades in keeping with the U of A's suggested grading system, which recommends a mean average of 2.62 for first-year courses, with six per cent of students receiving failing grades. However, Kovalyov's grades were reduced to a level he considers too low.

"I handed in the grades, then [David McNeilly] further suggests I lower the grades. I ended up with 17 Fs and average 2.1. I said [to the department], 'fine, you have the prerogative, but I would never agree, I think it's low enough.'"

David McNeilly, a faculty services officer for the Math department, explained his reasons for lowering the grades in a summary submitted with a disciplinary complaint filed against Kovalyov. He wrote that Kovalyov did not appropriately translate raw scores into letter grades and that he did not assign enough C-, D+, or D grades.

"Noting that students in other sections would need at least a mark of 51 to receive a grade of C, I found that was unreasonable to allow Dr. Kovalyov to award grades of C for marks in the range of 35–40. Similar issues applied to his grades of C+ and B-," McNeilly wrote.

After the department lowered the grades of the class, Kovalyov sent out several emails to students, dated July 14 and July 17, voicing his disagreement with the decision and advising students to appeal, as he felt the change was a "crime of forgery."

"I sent a letter to students saying that I find it appalling, that I think it's essentially fraud, and if any one of [them wants] to talk to me, or [their] parents want to talk to me, I'd be happy to meet," Kovalyov said.

On July 20, Kovalyov received an email from Department Chair Arturo Pianzola informing him that a disciplinary complaint was being filed against him and Kovalyov was being relieved from teaching duties. Pianzola also told Kovalyov to cease all communication with students on this matter.

According to Pianzola's email, Kovalyov's communications with students "disparage administration and suggest that administrators have not been honest [...] these assertions are unfounded and inappropriate."

The complaint was officially filed against Kovalyov on August 6 to University Provost and Vice-President (Academic) Carl Amrhein. It cited Kovalyov's rejection of the department's authority to set final grades, misleading students into believing the final grades assigned were improper, engaging in insubordination, and making inappropriate comments such as allegories to Stalin's purges, among other complaints as



DAN MCKECHNIE

SCHOOLYARD SCRAP Before he was relieved from teaching duties, Kovalyov taught Math courses in CAB, where his department is located.

their reasons for relieving him of his teaching duties.

However, Kovalyov still feels that his grades were sufficiently low. Other Math 115 courses in Winter 2010 had mean grade point averages ranging from 2.13 to 2.95, while the final average in his class was 1.79. In addition, he feels that lowering the grades at the department level is against university policy.

"[University grading guidelines] are for guidance only. Professors and departments are not required to match their course to the distributions that are there."

COLLEEN SKIDMORE
VICE-PROVOST (ACADEMIC)

"The university regulations require that we announce grading policy in the beginning of the semester. I announced the policy and told students how they would be graded. My grading was done in accordance to what I announced. The university completely disregarded, they violated the policy," he said.

However, the complaint filed against Kovalyov states that, "it is the department, and not the instructor, that assigns the final grades."

Vice-Provost (Academic) Colleen Skidmore explained that the grading

guidelines are simply guidelines and do not have to be followed.

"They are for guidance only. Professors and departments are not required to match their course to the distributions that are there. But it allows people to have an understanding of how grades might be distributed."

Skidmore couldn't comment on the specific incident involving Kovalyov but said that the University Calendar also states that grades are unofficial until approved by the appropriate faculty council.

"Faculty Councils have delegated the responsibility for doing the review and the final approval [of grades] to deans and/or chairs," she said. "The responsibility for those who are tasked with final approval is to be looking at the grade booklets as they do come in, keeping a sense that evaluation is reasonably consistent across time and across various sections of a particular course. So it's that second set of eyes which is in the students' best interest."

"It's not unusual for a chair of a department who's doing the work to look at a set of grades and speak to a professor about some questions," Skidmore added. "We try to work collegially."

Kovalyov was engaged in a similar dispute over a 300-level math course taught during Winter 2010, but was allowed to keep his originally submitted grades. He claims the issue of lowering grades has been a problem for the past several years.

Kovalyov is a tenured professor who has taught at the U of A for more than 20 years and is currently consulting with the faculty association on a resignation agreement with the university.

ALSO SEE EDITORIAL ♦ PAGE 9

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Webmail moves to Google by end of month

JUSTIN BELL
Managing Editor

Staff and students will notice a new look to their email at the end of the month when the University of Alberta transfers over to Google Apps.

The switch marks the end of a year-long negotiation process between the U of A and Google to get the popular email program to work with the university's existing system.

“What I’m hoping is that we can use this as an opportunity to get faculty, staff, and students using next generation tools.”

JONATHAN SCHAEFFER
ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT
(INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY)

According to Associate Vice President (Information and Technology) Jonathan Schaeffer, negotiations between the university and the tech giant were mostly about the details of the contract, not major privacy concerns. Schaeffer said the generic Google education contract would cover most legal concerns the university had, but they had to hammer out the details.

“What happens if there’s a security problem? Google says it would fix the security problems. From the legal point of view, we would like more detail about it,” Schaeffer said. “How

would you be notified? How timely would it be fixed? Google already does an excellent job of this, but the default contract doesn’t go into the detail. We just wanted to make sure the details were there.”

While some people were originally concerned about storing university data in the U.S., Schaeffer said Canada has similar laws to the American Patriot Act and that it wouldn’t make a difference where the data was stored.

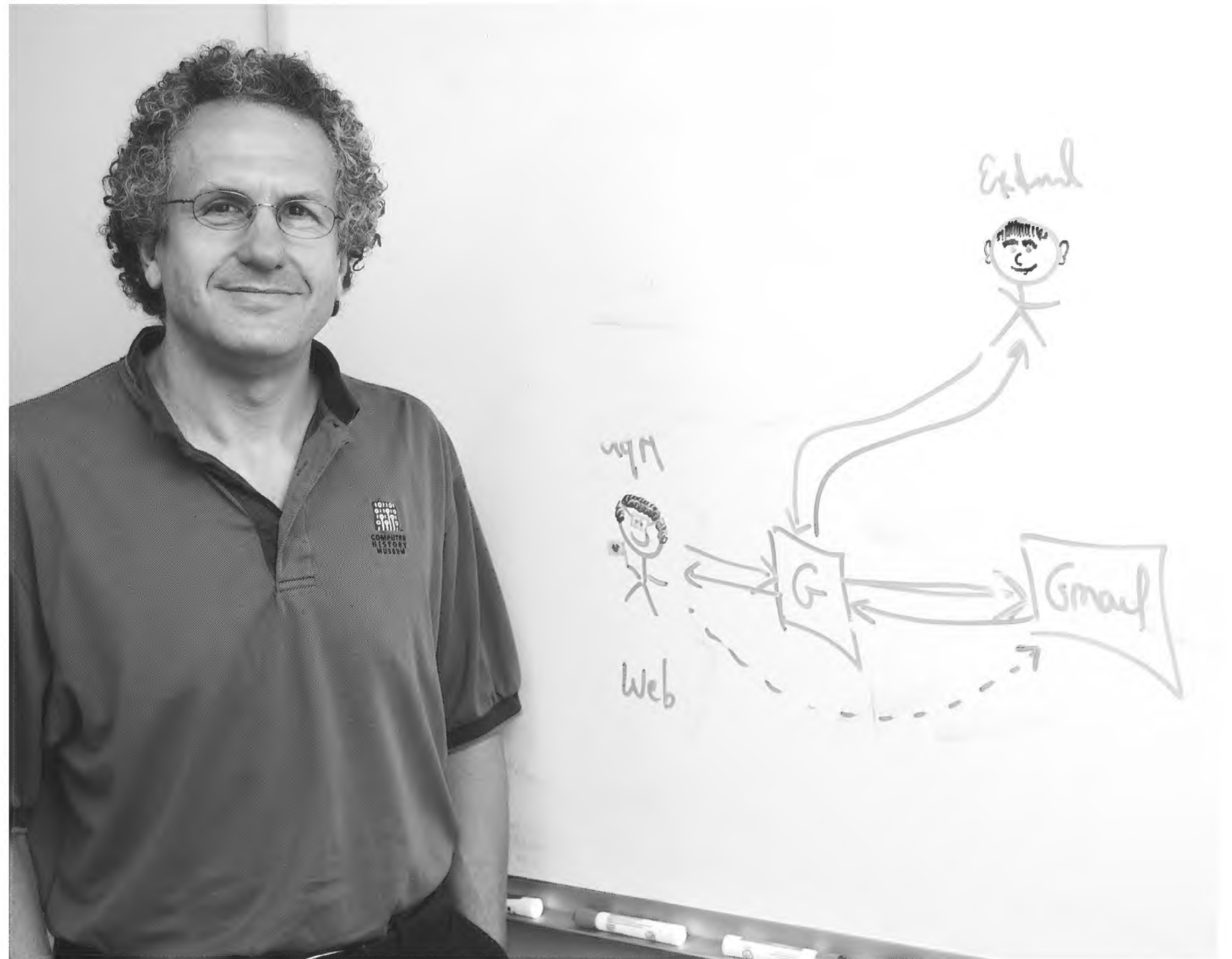
Contract negotiations are complete, but Schaeffer said it will take AICT a month to train staff and prepare for the move.

While students and staff will be familiar with the popular email service Google offers, it’s the extras that come as part of Google Apps that Schaeffer is most excited about. The ability to collaboratively edit documents in Google Docs or share calendars all add to the draw for the service. Students will even be able to make calls from within the email service.

“What I’m hoping is that we can use this as an opportunity to get faculty, staff, and students using next generation tools,” Schaeffer said.

The switch to Google Apps should also save the U of A money as the university will be consolidating more than 30 independent email systems into a single, free email program. The exact savings were unknown.

The transfer should be seamless for staff and students. All emails will continue to have their “@ualberta.ca” domain name, and any departments that had their own domains



FILE PHOTO: SAM BROOKS

YOU’VE GOT MAIL After almost a year of negotiating, the U of A has finalized the details of their contract with Google.

will also see them switched over.

By moving to Google’s platform, Schaeffer hopes IT staff across the university will be free to worry about other problems.

“When you talk to the IT people across Canada, most [are] over-worked,” said Schaeffer. “What [the switch to Google Apps] does is take

these busy people and remove a distraction from their job.”

While he said the change wouldn’t lead directly to the loss of any staff, he did point out the difficult financial position the university is in and that staffing cuts are always a possibility.

Other universities are already looking at the contract hammered out

by the U of A, as the details could be applied to almost any institution across the country. With Alberta’s relatively strict privacy laws, a contract that can work in this province will likely work in most others.

Officials from the University of Saskatchewan said they were keeping a close eye on the negotiations.

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Budget deficit, Mathewson, hazing rituals top campus news stories for 2010

HAYLEY DUNNING
News Staff

DEALING WITH A DEFICIT

This last year saw the U of A lay off staff, cut phone lines in certain departments, and implement a new student fee in an attempt to deal with an expected \$59 million gap. The operating budget for 2010/11 was eventually approved with a \$14.8 million deficit.

Faced with such a gap in the budget, the university originally aimed to spread the pain three ways — with \$20 million coming from students, \$20 million from eliminating inefficiencies, and \$20 million from staff in the form of furlough days and layoffs.

On the student side, news of a proposed \$550 per semester mandatory non-instructional fee referred to as the Common Student Space, Sustainability, and Security (CoSSS) fee was enough to push the Students' Union to organize a march on the legislature. On March 18, nearly 400 students protested the additional fee, which was eventually reduced to \$290 per semester.

In addition to the CoSSS fee, four faculties at the U of A saw the approval of market modifiers. While tuition growth is normally tied to the Consumer Price Index, which measures the cost of living increases, the university argued that for some faculties, tuition had been too low when it was tied to CPI. The U of A argued that this was the case for a number of faculties, though ultimately the government only agreed in the case of Engineering, Pharmacy, Business, and Graduate Studies.

However, the new fee and the market modifiers couldn't solve all the budget difficulties. In September, 48 staff members were laid off, while 182 left after taking the Voluntary Retirement Incentive Program. Coupled with an increase in enrolment and a decrease in course selection, many class sizes have grown.

DEFINE 'PERSONAL'

Last year started off with the departure of Students' Union President Kory Mathewson, who resigned on January 11 for what he termed "personal reasons." *The Gateway* obtained documents in September showing that Mathewson's Vice Presidents had given Mathewson an ultimatum: he could either resign or the executive committee would recommend his removal to council. The documents also showed that the other executives presented Mathewson with the choice due to concerns they had with his performance.

However, at the time of Mathewson's resignation, the other executives denied giving Mathewson an ultimatum, with Vice President (Academic) Leah Trueblood repeating "we did not" three times after being asked if the executives had asked for his resignation. The executives also refused to elaborate on the matter when asked at Students' Council in January.

After *The Gateway* obtained documents indicating that Mathewson was pushed to resign, several of the executives commented.

"I've kind of equated it in my head to a personnel matter, which wouldn't normally be in the public domain for anything, really," Vice President (Operations and Finance) Zach



DAN MCKECHNIE, PETE YEE, AARON YEO, MATT HIRJI

Fentiman eventually explained.

However, some felt that it should've been public knowledge. At least one former councillor raised concerns with how student money had been spent in the affair, with Mathewson's direct legal expenses totaling \$2,532 and the SU spending up to \$7,896 in that period on Mathewson-related legal fees.

"I think one dollar is too much. I don't think any money really should be spent," former councillor Adam Zepp said. "I definitely see how people could be angry that their SU money, and money to go to school, is being spent on essentially hiding information from them. I'd be the first to say that this is complete bullshit. And I think everyone should know exactly what happened."

HAZING AT DKE

Hazing activities at the University of Alberta chapter of the Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity came to light in late October, which was described in video footage and by eyewitness testimony.

During the DKE initiation last January, pledges were made to eat their own vomit, go without sleep, and spend time enclosed in a plywood box.

"[Pledges are] not told what happens. There's very little care actually done for them. They're stolen from, they're taken advantage of, they're yelled at [...], they're not told when it will end," a source present at the initiation told *The Gateway*. "They're

definitely hurt mentally and physically at the end of it."

A university investigation was soon launched and by November, the U of A DKE chapter had its student group status temporarily suspended. DKE International, after conducting its own investigation, provisionally suspended the U of A chapter for three years. The university's own investigation is still ongoing.

JUSTICE FOR JANITORS

Foreign workers for the U of A's cleaning contractor Bee-Clean Building Maintenance alleged in October 2010 that they were forced to perform unpaid labour, were refused overtime pay, and were threatened with deportation if they unionized. Workers and supporters created the 'Justice for Janitors' campaign and began proceedings to sue Bee-Clean. An airing of complaints later in October saw Bee-Clean categorically deny the allegations and announce that they were counter-suing the union for defamation. The U of A refused to get involved, which provoked displeasure from many staff and students.

In mid-November, Bee-Clean said they were willing to negotiate with Justice for Janitors, who then cancelled a press conference as a show of good faith, and the call for what had become a controversial presentation at Students' Council was dropped.

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City focuses on transit, new arena

KAITLYN GRANT
News Writer

EDMONTON EXPANDS TRANSIT SYSTEM

The expansion of Edmonton's Light Rail Transit (LRT) system made headlines in 2010 with an expansion in April, extending the line's reach further into south Edmonton.

The expansion increased ridership in the city to an estimated 100,000 people in September after university students returned to school. But things weren't all rosy with the expansion. Problems began as LRT patterns did not coincide with traffic lights and commute times for vehicles needing to cross the lines increased considerably. In addition, the increase in ridership left people standing on the platform as trains filled quickly. After 7:30 a.m., Park and Ride lots were full, and

complaints of volume level from nearby residents began to arise.

While the city is still trying to work these kinks in the system, the LRT expansions continue as a part of the long-term plan for Transit Oriented Development. Transportation Planning Manager Brian Latte said that City Council adopted a 30-year plan that looks at developing a greener Edmonton and focuses on development based on public transportation.

RIDER NATION DESCENDS ON EDMONTON

The city streets filled with green Saskatchewan jerseys and game day anticipation as Edmonton hosted the 98th Grey Cup from November 25–28.

While Edmonton did not make it to the Grey Cup finals, the city still buzzed with excitement, which was increased with the influx of thousands of Saskatchewan Roughriders fans who travelled to Edmonton for the game.

"Nothing brings Canadians together like the Grey Cup, and no one has a better track record as Grey Cup hosts than Edmontonians," said Canadian Football League Commissioner Mark Cohon after it was announced that Edmonton would host the 2010 Grey Cup.

Furthermore, the game was the second consecutive Grey Cup held in Alberta, with Calgary playing host in 2009. The 2010 Grey Cup also marked 100

years for the Edmonton Eskimos team.

DOWNTOWN ARENA STILL UP FOR DEBATE

The Katz Group announced plans in February for a new Oilers arena in downtown Edmonton to improve the team's standing in the NHL.

After a disappointing 2009-10 season, Oilers owner Daryl Katz said change needed to occur to bring the team into the future. He continued to say that the team's performance had been less than pleasing.

The new downtown arena would include a community rink, hotels, a casino, student housing, and other businesses. The plans were presented to City Council in July 2010, but many details and concerns are being discussed before the plans are put to a vote by the city.

CITY CENTRE AIRPORT A MAJOR ELECTION ISSUE

Stephen Mandel was re-elected as mayor in the October elections and promised to close the City Centre Airport.

"This is about building a great city, about building its future and making it a place we all can be so proud of," Mandel said after his victory, in which he won 55.1 per cent of the vote.

The decision to close the City Centre Airport was based on the Mandel's new vision for a greener Edmonton. When the airport is closed, building heights can increase and change the appearance of downtown Edmonton.

There are still people against closing the City Centre Airport, such as the vocal group Envision Edmonton, who called for a plebiscite on the matter.

BEST OF CAMPUS CRIME BEAT 2010

Compiled by Alexandria Eldridge

DROPPING ACID

On the afternoon of February 1, staff in the Chemistry building reported that a female had entered a lab and taken a bottle of chemicals after she informed staff she was looking for acid and was told to leave the area. The female was believed to have psychiatric issues.

Officers performed checks of the area and all surrounding buildings but could not locate the female. Approximately one hour later, CSS received a report of a female screaming and causing a disturbance in the Phys Ed building. Officers arrived on scene and found the woman in a fair amount of distress and threatening to throw acid at a random male in the area. After the woman calmed down, it was discovered she was the individual who stole the chemical (which was not acid). The woman was a current student and she voluntarily stayed to speak with police. She was eventually taken to University Hospital for psychiatric assessment.

WE DIDN'T START THE FIRE

On March 5 at 8:30 p.m., 5-0 received a report of fireworks being set off near the Timms Centre. CSS arrived on scene and spoke to people in the area who had seen a group leave just prior to the arrival of CSS.

THE WATER'S WARM HERE

At noon on March 16, staff reported an unaffiliated male bathing himself in a

washroom in the Phys. Ed. East building. Attending officers determined that the male had been previously trespassed and was placed under arrest for trespassing. The male was issued a summons and transported off campus.

I THOUGHT THIS WAS THE WRONG EXIT OFF THE FREEWAY

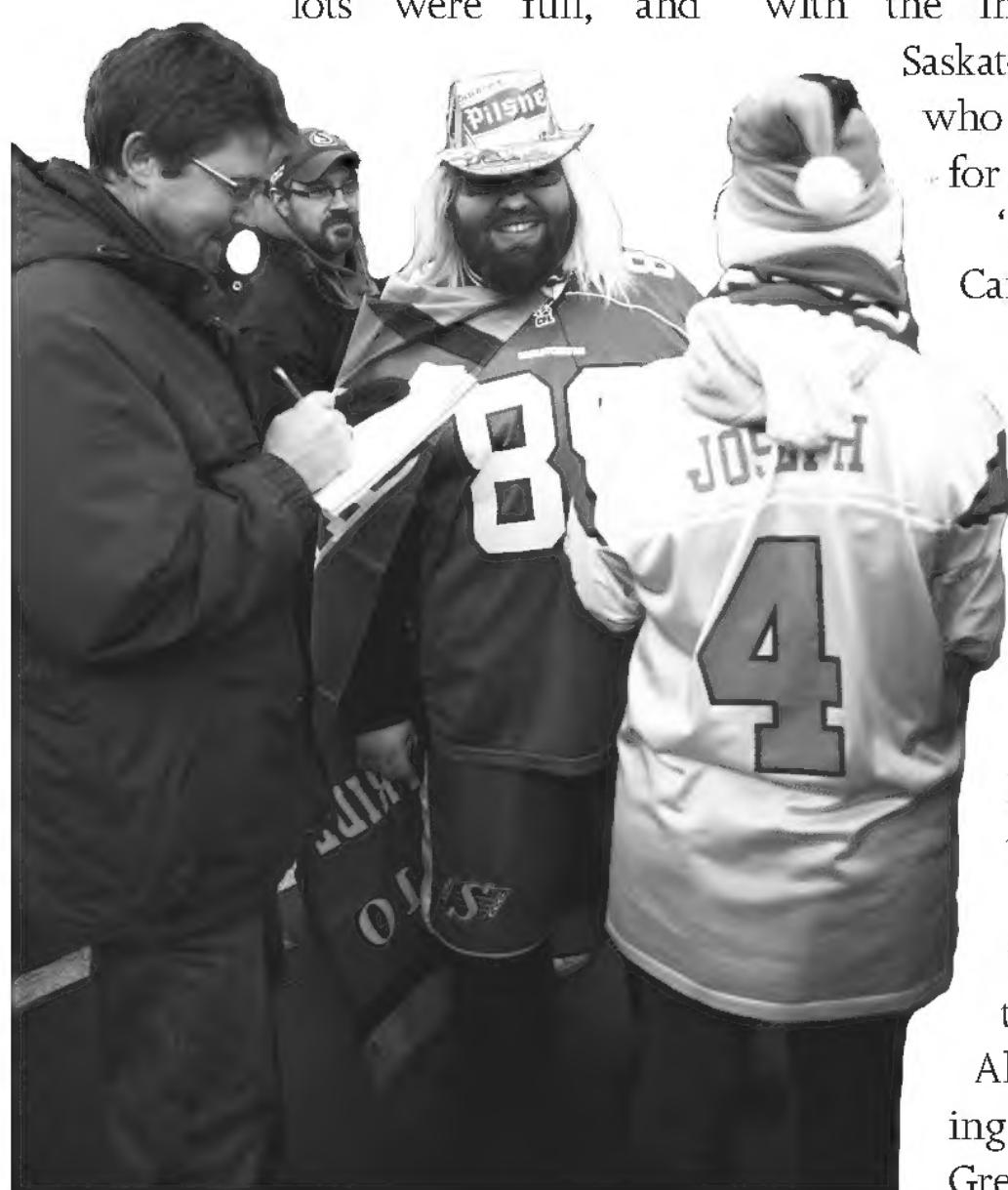
On September 7 at 6:30 a.m., grounds staff reported seeing a vehicle "jammed" in a wheelchair ramp in Quad near CAB. CSS investigated and when they ran the plate for the vehicle, it came back as being reported stolen. Edmonton police were contacted and towed the vehicle to their impound lot.

DON'T LEAVE ANGRY, JUST LEAVE

On September 8 at about 2:30 p.m., staff in SUB observed a male "mumbling" to himself, wearing a yellow foam hat, dressed in black. CSS did a check of the area and weren't able to locate the male. They received another call about the same male and found him eating a pizza crust at the Ski Club booth in Quad. The male was identified and wasn't a student. He left after being approached by Campus Security.

TIMBIT TANTRUM

On November 19 at around 2 p.m., UAPS received a rather unusual telephone complaint from a male. The man explained he had been at the Tim Horton's in ETLC and had ordered 10 timbits. After receiving his order, the customer checked his timbits and noticed one had been crushed. He re-attended the counter area and explained the state of his timbit. The clerk replied she had given him 11 to make up for the crushed one. Words were exchanged and the clerk came from behind the counter and threw the box of timbits at the male. The customer will be speaking to the manager on November 22.



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Syncrude trials, health care top provincial headlines for 2010

TYLER DAWSON
News Staff

SYNCRUDE FOUND GUILTY IN DUCK DEATHS

In June, Syncrude Canada Ltd. was found guilty for the 2008 deaths of 1,606 ducks in a tailings ponds belonging to the company.

The incident sparked a public outcry, and international public relations campaigns opposed to the Alberta oilsands development have been ongoing. The fines levied by Judge Ken Tjosvold totalled around \$3 million, the largest environmental fine in Canadian history.

Federal Environment Minister Jim Prentice hailed the ruling as one that demonstrates the quality of Canadian environmental law, while Greenpeace spokesperson Mike Hudema called it “a slap on the wrist.”

WILDROSE ALLIANCE MAKES GAINS IN PROVINCIAL POLITICS

After a year of growth in the polls in 2009, the upstart Wildrose Alliance Party made tangible gains in the provincial legislature in 2010.

The party now has four MLAs

sitting in the legislature after winning a seat in a by-election and welcoming one independent and two former Conservatives into their caucus who crossed the floor. Leader Danielle Smith is not an MLA, but the party has 13,000 members across the province. MLA Heather Forsyth believes they have a chance to replace the Progressive Conservatives as the ruling party. However, analysts suggest that they need to develop a coherent party platform before becoming a major contender in Alberta politics.

COOKIEGATE

While health care has never been far from the headlines in Alberta, the firing of Alberta Health Services president and CEO Stephen Duckett added excitement near the end of 2010.

Duckett was removed from his position after refusing to speak to reporters outside a meeting on Alberta’s emergency rooms, claiming he was busy eating his cookie. Five days later, the Alberta Health Services board ended his tenure as head of the program, citing Duckett’s compromised ability to do his job, given the public outcry over the incident.

This came two days after the dismissal of Dr. Raj Sherman, a Conservative MLA who broke with party lines and criticized the handling of emergency room inadequacies by the Stelmach government. He now sits as an independent in the provincial legislature.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS ACROSS THE PROVINCE

It was election year in the province of Alberta.

Incumbent Mayor Stephen Mandel maintained his position for a third term in Edmonton, while neighbouring Strathcona County saw Cathy Olesen ousted in favour of councillor Linda Osinchuk. Lethbridge and Medicine Hat also brought new faces into the office of mayor, while incumbents in St. Albert and Red Deer retained their positions.

Calgary had arguably the most exciting outcome, with Naheed Nenshi becoming Canada’s first Muslim mayor, scoring a victory over two well-funded and prominent opponents. However, Nenshi utilized social media tactics and the internet, building a grassroots campaign that overcame his competitors.

Olympics, G20 attract national attention

SCOTT FENWICK
News Staff

OLYMPICS SHOW NATIONAL PRIDE

All eyes were on Vancouver in February 2010 when it hosted the world at the Winter Olympic Games, where the Canadian men’s hockey team won the gold medal, sparking jubilation across the country.

Canada beat the United States in the hockey final when Nova Scotia’s Sidney Crosby scored an overtime goal, marking a successful end to an Olympics that had a stumbling start. Social activists planned to protest the games, Georgian luger Nodar Kumaritashvili died in practice on the first day, and Canadian athletes didn’t perform as well as expected the first week of competition. But early pessimistic predictions faded as Canada went on to win 14 gold medals, more than any other country.

ALLEGATIONS EMBROIL FORMER MP JAFFER

Former Edmonton MP Rahim Jaffer came under personal scrutiny in April as media reports surfaced that he lobbied his former Conservative colleagues without officially registering himself to be a lobbyist.

The allegations came little more than a month after drug possession charges against Jaffer were dropped. Despite denials that he was illegally lobbying federal politicians, Jaffer’s company’s

website featured the Conservative Party logo and stated that Jaffer himself helps “secure support from the Canadian government.”

G20 VIOLENCE, COSTS CAUSE OUTRAGE

Ontario and federal government ministers spent the second half of the year deflecting questions about police actions and spiralling costs after world leaders met in Toronto for the G20 summit in June.

Anarchist groups set cars on fire and smashed store windows, which led to the arrest of more than 900 people, many of whom were peaceful protestors. It was the largest mass arrest in Canadian history.

The Toronto Police Service also came under fire when they later admitted that a supposed rule allowing police to arrest anyone within five meters of the site’s \$4.4-million security fence didn’t exist. The government also defended the \$857 million spent on the summit, including \$57,000 spent to construct an artificial lake for the conference’s media centre.

BACKLASH AGAINST CENSUS CHANGES

Moves by the Conservative government in July to make the long-form census optional were met with opposition from professors, business executives, and economists who argued that it would hurt the quality of future census data.

Industry Minister Tony Clement said that the long-form census was too intrusive, arguing that Canadians shouldn’t divulge personal information under the threat of prosecution. However, following Clement’s claim that the move had Statistics Canada’s support, the agency’s chief statistician, Munir Sheikh, resigned, saying that a voluntary survey cannot be used as a substitute to a mandatory census.

Critics of the change argued that it would make census data less reliable due to an expected decrease in responses, affecting the delivery of government services.

Despite the controversy, the government is still moving forward with a voluntary long-form for the 2011 census.

FORMER COLONEL’S CRIMES SHOCK NATION

Former Canadian Forces Colonel Russell Williams captured national attention when he was sentenced to life in prison in October for first-degree murder and sexual assault charges.

Williams pled guilty to the murders of Jessica Lloyd, 27, and Cpl. Marie-France Comeau, 37. Williams’ crimes were shocking, given his position as base commander for Canadian Forces Base Trenton. His secret double life was revealed during his trial, where explicit details of Williams’ numerous crimes, in addition to photos he took wearing women’s underwear, were publicized.



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World news for 2010 filled with economic, environmental disasters

JOEL RACKEL
News Staff

EARTHQUAKE SHAKES HAITI

On January 12, a magnitude 7.0 earthquake devastated Haiti, claiming more than 230,000 lives in one of the deadliest quakes ever recorded.

The natural disaster laid waste Haiti's capital Port-au-Prince, leaving three million people homeless. Haiti's already chronically weak infrastructure proved unable to stand up to the force of the earthquake.

At the end of 2010, Haiti was still in a dire state, with most of the debris yet to be cleared. Throughout the year the country also faced hurricanes, forgotten aid promises, contested elections, and a large cholera outbreak.

In a story in *The Huffington Post*, Haitian refugee Aliodor Pierre lamented the nation's lack of leadership and international guidance.

"Why would you accept for us to be living in poverty?" he said, adding, "God is the only one we have hope in."

OIL SPILL SPELLS DISASTER FOR GULF OF MEXICO

On April 20, the BP Deepwater Horizon oil platform exploded, spewing 4.9 million barrels of oil into the Gulf of Mexico over a period of three months.

Eleven people were killed in the explosion, and the ensuing oil spill spelt disaster for ecosystems along the Gulf coast. American President Barack Obama said that the fallout from the spill would be a major consideration in future energy regulations.

"I think this disaster is going to shape how we think about the environment and energy for many years to come," he told reporters in June.

Skimming ships, oil booms, dispersants, and other techniques were used to try and halt the spread of the toxic sludge. Numerous attempts were made to stem the flow of the leak,



SUPPLIED/MARCO DORMINO

which was finally capped on July 15.

GREECE'S ECONOMY FALTERS

In early 2010, it was revealed that Greece had massive non-repayable debt and the country's credit was ultimately downgraded to nothing.

It was feared that the economic failure would spread to other European nations, and the euro's value declined.

On May 2, the European Union and the International Monetary Fund bailed out Greece to the tune of 110 billion euros, on the condition of austerity measures such as public sector paycuts and changes to the retirement age, conditions that were met with destabilizing protests in Athens.

CHILEAN MINERS RESCUED AFTER 69 DAYS UNDERGROUND

A cave-in at a mine near Copiapo, Chile on August 5 left 33 men trapped 700 meters underground for 69 days. It took authorities 17 days to find the miners alive after they stuck a note to a percussion drill reading, "we are alright in the shelter, the 33 [of us]."

Rescuers sent medicine, food, instructions, communication devices, and entertainment to the men through a small hole for weeks. Three plans for rescue were implemented, with one drill eventually reaching the miners on October 14.

Over two days, miners climbed into a capsule that took them through a tight drill shaft to the surface. More than one billion people watched the televised rescue that saved all 33 miners in one of 2010's most inspiring events.

WIKILEAKS RELEASES CLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS, FOUNDER OUT ON BAIL

The activist whistleblower website WikiLeaks made headlines worldwide throughout 2010 with the release of numerous classified documents.

These leaks included 90,000 internal reports about the war in Afghanistan and more than 250,000 American diplomatic cables. Supporters of WikiLeaks commended its goals of human rights activism and increasing transparency in government, while detractors like American Secretary of State Hillary Clinton have called it "an attack on the international community."

In December, Swedish authorities were looking for WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange on allegations of sexual assault — allegations his lawyer has described as politically motivated. He is currently released on bail. Meanwhile, there have been calls for him to be extradited to the United States for the release of the classified documents, though the U.S. has not formally charged Assange, who is an Australian citizen.

Copyright Board puts \$45 increase on hold

JAMIE ROSS
CUP Atlantic Bureau Chief

FREDERICTON (CUP) — New rules that would change how much universities and students are charged for photocopies and course packs won't come into play for at least another few years.

The Copyright Board of Canada issued an interim decision on December 23 that puts a hold on a proposed tariff put forth by the licensing agency Access Copyright.

The organization is asking the federal government to raise the fee that allows schools and students to access and copy copyrighted material from \$3.38 per student plus 10 cents per copied page for course packs, to a blanket fee of \$45 per full-time equivalent student.

Under the interim tariff, all parties concerned can go about their business as usual, says Erin Finlay, legal counsel and manager of legal services for Access Copyright.

"The great news about the interim tariff is that actually nothing has to change. The institutions, the professors and the students — everyone can operate as they have been for the last 15 years," said Finlay, adding the proposed tariff will take the board a "few years" to process.

The old agreement, which the interim tariff has extended, expired December 31. The board issued the interim measure without reasons stated because it considered the decision "urgent."

Critics of the proposed tariff say the fee increase is too substantial.

Greg Fergus, director of public affairs with the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, says raising the rate to \$45 per full-time student doesn't make sense because in postsecondary education today, learning is being done more and more in the digital realm.

"What Access Copyright is proposing is paying more for something we're using less of," he said, noting that some schools already pay double fees, for both digital and Access Copyright licences.

"What it means is we should be paying somewhere close to \$8–10 [per full-time student] ... it doesn't seem right to me that we'd be paying anywhere between 2.5 or even five times as much for a service we're using less and less of."

A number of universities, including the University of Alberta and Ryerson University, had decided before the December 31 deadline to deny the proposed increase and let their contracts expire.

In an email circulated to faculty and staff at the University of New Brunswick in mid-December, Anthony Secco, vice-president academic at the Fredericton campus, and Robert MacKinnon, vice-president of the Saint John campus, wrote that there was no option to continue the current agreement, and that the university had rejected the alternative fee plan.

They also encouraged faculty to use electronic materials licensed by the library because its terms of agreement allow for course reserve and classroom use.

Finlay said there have been a lot of misconceptions about the proposed tariff and fee increases, which she says have been grossly exaggerated.

She said you can't take the old rate of \$3.38 per student and apply it directly to the new price of \$45 without considering the 10 cents per page that's paid by the student each time he or she buys a course pack.

She added that the old licence only covered photocopying, and that the tariffs would cover different types of digital uses like scanning and posting to websites.

"There has to be a value captured for those types of uses," she said.



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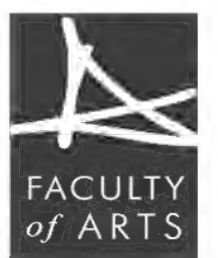
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Kovalyov case breaks trust in grading

BY NOW, YOU'VE LIKELY RECEIVED ALL OF YOUR grades back from last semester, and are either entering the new term content with your achievement from last semester, or heading to RATT under the assumption that this term already hit its nadir, and you should start drowning your sorrows now. But in general, you probably at least feel your marks reflect the effort you put into your classes. However, an incident came to light at the U of A over the break that should call into question students' trust in the university's grading scheme.

Math professor Mikhail Kovalyov was relieved of his teaching duties by the Mathematical and Statistical Sciences department this past summer after the department lowered the grades of his Winter 2010 Math 115 class, claiming that the professor did not give out enough C-, D+, or D grades. Kovalyov informed students that the marks they were receiving were not the ones he had handed out, which was one of several reasons that caused the department to inform Kovalyov that he would no longer be teaching.

What's strange about this case is that after Kovalyov had already failed 22 per cent of the class — when the standard university grading scheme calls for six per cent to fail in 100-level courses — the department still felt that not enough people had failed or gotten low grades. This might be reasonable if the class average had been above the 2.62 mean that the university recommends, or if Kovalyov's class had been unreasonably above what other Math 115 classes had received as averages. But the fact that Kovalyov's 2.16 GPA average was already far below the mean, and was one of the lowest averages out of all Winter 2010 Math 115 class, makes this a weak argument.

It's unclear what the department gains from failing so many students or giving the class a final average of 1.79, little higher than a C-. It could be seen as maintaining "standards," and it's true that students should do poorly if they aren't pulling their weight. But what "fail" means inherently depends on the difficulty of the coursework, something that only an individual professor can judge. While it's currently the department's prerogative to approve the final grades, if they can lower the marks by bulk like this, there doesn't seem much point to professors handing out grades at all.

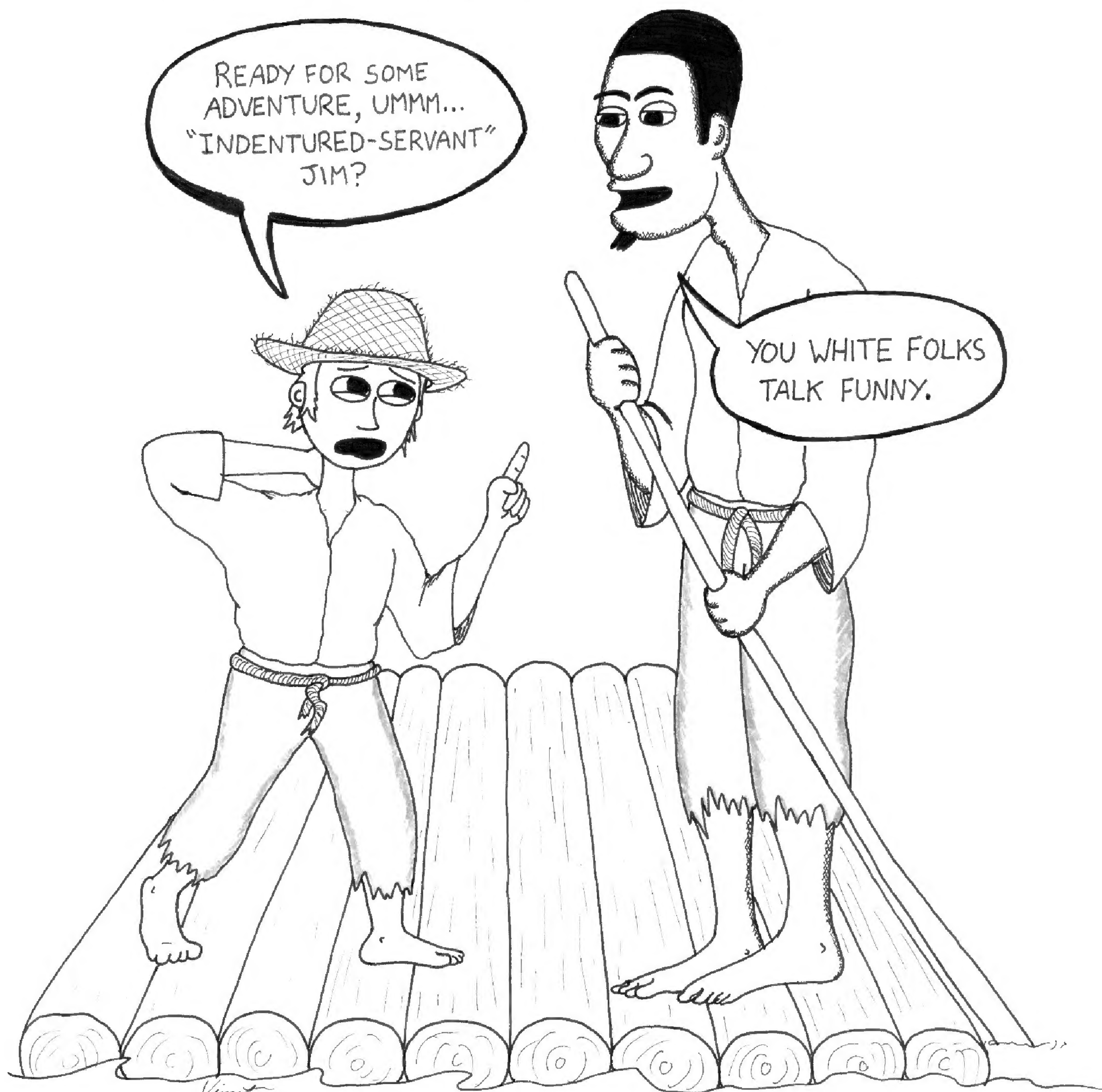
Cases like this decrease students' trust that the grades they receive, and the metrics used to grade them, mean anything. Students on the curve are compared to other students within their own class, not to students in other sections of the course, to account for differences in difficulty between sections and teaching. But it's concerning when students not only have to worry about their professors, but the departments as well.

Kovalyov admittedly didn't do a lot to help his case with the department. While I don't think he was wrong by informing students, calling the administration's changes a "cimre of forgery," and mentioning Stalin's purges, while hilarious, likely won't earn you any points with the people you're trying to convince. But it does seem like he has the best interests of his students in mind, and it's refreshing to see a professor stand up for them, when it seems many couldn't care less about who they teach.

All levels of education, not just postsecondary, deal with the issues inherent to grading, and grade inflation has been a contentious issue amongst Canadian institutions. But grade deflation isn't any better, and both practices call into question the legitimacy of using grades as a determiner of merit. And while this is an isolated case, it should cause students here to question what marks actually mean. The grades that you received over the holidays should mean something, if your education and degree are to have any value. But instances like this don't instill confidence that the letters that we receive from our classes are anything more than just letters.

JOHN KMECH
Editor-in-Chief

HUCKLEBERRY FINN: THE REVISED EDITION



ROSS VINCENT

letters TO THE eds

Disabled student ineligible for scholarship

I just finished my Education degree this last term in December 2010 and found out that I was eligible to receive the Jason Lang Scholarship based on my GPA being 3.5. I was thrilled to hear this as I have always been a student who worked hard but never got top grades. I also have two young children and having an award like this is such a great reflection for them to see; that regardless of life circumstances, academic excellence can be achieved if you put your heart and soul into it!

Currently, I received information from both the University of Alberta Awards office and the ALIS awards office that told me that I was disqualified to receive this award because I only attended six credits of course work this last fall term of 2010. I am a student with a learning disability and require at times a reduced course load which I have official documentation to support this accommodation. This documentation is noted in my records through the University of Alberta and Student Finance. I find it biased and contradictory to be disqualified for this or any other award based on the argument that Student Finance qualifies me as a full-time student with six credits of course work, but the awards office through

ALIS does not.

I will make note that any accommodations given to students with disabilities are for their benefit so they can perform and be as successful as any other student who does not require a need for accommodations in a specific area. This is fully recognized by the governments of Alberta and Canada, and the University of Alberta.

I have contacted ALIS and spoke to one of their representatives who told me that students with accommodations like mine do not meet the requirements even though they are recognized as full-time students by Student Finance. When the qualifications for these awards were set, I don't think that there was a review on whether these addressed "accommodation" and full-time status. There needs to be a review of the criteria so that it does not result in the systemic exclusion of students who excel in their academic endeavours.

KRISTIE SERIGHT
Alumnus

Here's a thought: make your own sandwich

Why is it that whenever I go to a place to buy food, the employees can never make it right? For example, at both the Subway locations in SUB and HUB, I ask for lettuce, and they put only a miniscule amount of lettuce on my sandwich, barely enough to cover the bread. And I'm

a vegetarian, so what else are you going to put on it, really? I go to Tim Horton's in CAB and I ask for a large candy cane hot chocolate, and they tell me it only comes in medium, or I'll ask for a hot chocolate with mint flavor, and they give me a cup of nasty watered-down hot chocolate, minus the mint. Tim's also doesn't like to give you enough spread for your bagel. That's upsetting and to top all of this off, Starbucks has made my drinks wrong *three times*, even after asking them to remake it. I mean, this is getting ridiculous.

This is getting to the point where I will walk three blocks down the street to go to the Tim Horton's and Wendy's location on 85th and 112th just to get my freaking large candy cane hot chocolate, or the Subway nearby on the same road. The only reason the places on campus are getting any business is because either people have stuck with their double doubles, or are in a hurry to get something to eat before their next class. I want something to change, and change soon, because I like to enjoy some of the finer tastes in life and not "just deal" with a sandwich filled with nothing.

CHELSEA DEPAPE
Science/Education II

Safewalkers miss out on AntiFreeze fun

Safewalk was expecting to field a record three teams at the SU's AntiFreeze this year. Unfortunately,

with the elimination of the evenings-only (Iceberg) division, an alternate new record may be set: zero Safewalk teams. This will be the first time in four years that Safewalk will not field a team. Many Safewalkers have commitments during the day, including work (some of us work for the SU), class, and volunteering for Safewalk and other SU services.

It is unclear to me why the Iceberg division was eliminated. What is clear is that many alumni of AntiFreeze will not be returning this year and many potential new teams will be discouraged from taking part due to the full-day time commitment. Whatever happen to "If it ain't broke, don't fix it?"

MISHA MIAZGA-RODRIGUEZ
Disgruntled Safewalker V

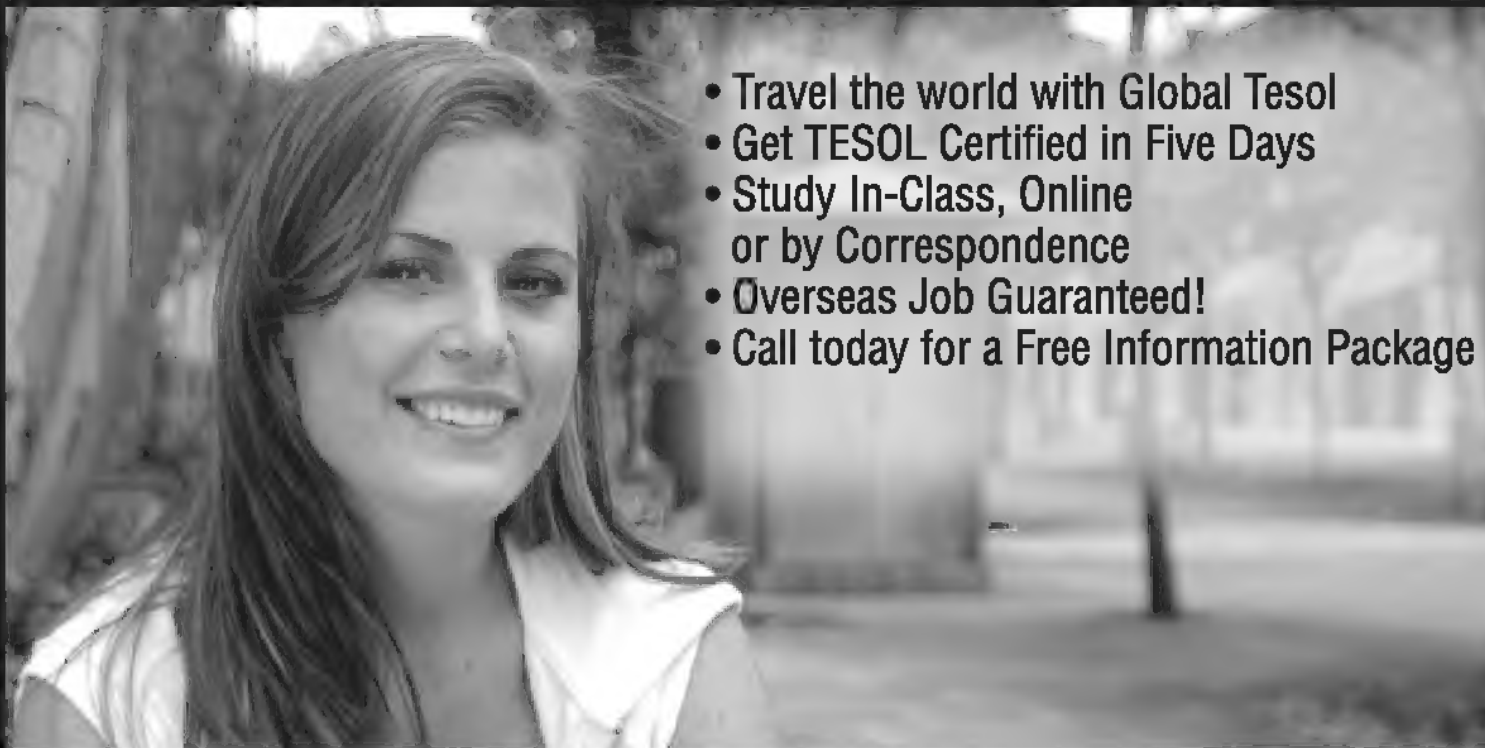
All birth control pills carry risks

RE: ("Canadians launch birth control lawsuit," Megan Sarrazin, November 30)

The physicians of the University Health Centre were concerned about the recent article published in *The Gateway* regarding a lawsuit that has been launched in Canada regarding the safety of the birth control pills Yaz and Yasmin, containing the progesterone drospirenone, that implied unusual safety concerns for these products. The lawsuit was launched in March of this year and there is also longer-standing legal action

PLEASE SEE LETTERS • PAGE 10

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NDP faces gender trap in B.C.



ADAM
WOODS

A 20-year-old regulation is coming back to bite British Columbia's New Democratic Party in the ass. On paper, the policy seems like a great idea: it stipulates that there must be at least one male and one female in the three top leadership positions of the party at all times.

It's an example of a party that fights for equality leading by example, and practicing what it preaches. But the NDP has hit a bit of a snag — Carole James, who was until recently the party's leader in B.C., resigned in early December. While she hoped this would cure the NDP's problems in the province, the party has now encountered yet another hitch: men currently occupy the other leadership positions of the party, president and treasurer.

Normally this wouldn't be a problem, because the party could just elect a new woman as party leader. The rules would be followed and everyone would go home happy. However, not a single female party member has expressed interest in running for the leadership position. Given the difficulty of changing the rules in the party's constitution, it's probable that one of the party's other leading men will be forced to resign. Simply speaking, they have been trapped in a room of their own rules.

This isn't a matter of equality

or an issue of combatting sexism. Those two men were fairly elected to their positions by the party. If three women led the party, it would be a wonderful addition to the number of elected ladies.

The current men in charge are individuals who have earned their titles. Party President Moe Sihota was elected to the B.C. Legislature in 1986, and was the first Indian-Canadian to be elected to federal or provincial government, as well as the first to serve on a provincial cabinet. Bob Smits, the party treasurer, is a very well-known labour law advocate.

Certainly attaining equal representation is a noble goal, one that the NDP has taken steps towards. [...] However, in terms of actual voting, gender doesn't play a huge role.

Neither of these men should have to give up their positions within the party so they can be replaced with a woman.

Further to the point, while it's hard to speculate who may be running for the leadership position, the likely candidates are quite esteemed themselves. Mike Farnworth, Adrian Dix, and John Horgan are among some of the suspected candidates, all long-time members of the B.C.'s NDP with a wealth of political experience. There are obviously a lot of very qualified individuals, who are occupying or may occupy a big

leadership position. Unless being male has a negative effect on their leadership abilities, there is nothing else to disqualify any of the party's men from the position. While B.C.'s NDP may be trying to make things equal, this isn't the way.

Certainly attaining equal representation is a noble goal, one the NDP has taken steps towards. In the last election, the party ran a number of women, minority, and gay candidates. Ideally, running an equal number of male and female candidates would result in equality in parliament. However, in terms of actual voting, gender doesn't play a huge role. The Green Party didn't lose the last election because it's not led by a man, and Linda Duncan didn't win her riding just because she's a woman. The Green Party lost because not as many people voted for Green Party candidates, and Linda Duncan won because she convinced voters that she was the best candidate for the job.

In the real world, it shouldn't matter whose "turn" it is to lead, but rather who is truly the better candidate for the position. In B.C.'s NDP, maybe the better candidates right now just happens to be male — especially considering no women have expressed interest in ascending to the top leadership position. In a few years, maybe the better candidates will all happen to be female. In which case, that should also be allowed.

B.C.'s NDP is a very strong party, and they get marks for effort, but being excessively politically correct and inclusionary isn't the answer. When we reach a point where people are being made to resign because of their sex, it's discrimination.

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LETTERS • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

pending in the United States as well. In response, the Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada (SOGC) reviewed this issue and published a position statement in March.

All birth control pills carry some risk of venous thromboembolism, but the risk is significantly less than those related to pregnancy. There are some situations where the risk of embolism is higher because of a pre-existing medical condition and these risks should be screened for at time of first prescription by the physician.

It is possible that there may have been a perceived increase in risk with Yaz and Yasmin as drospirone products are particularly helpful in conditions associated with acne and hirsutism and are often prescribed to manage these symptoms. Many of these patients, by virtue of their condition, are overweight and the actual increase in risk is due to the obesity, not the type of progesterone.

A literature review conducted by SOGC members concluded that there is no reason to believe there are serious health concerns with any oral contraceptive, including those containing drospirone. Two high quality prospective studies containing over 120,000 women showed no difference in venous thromboembolism rates between currently marketed oral contraceptives. Yaz and Yasmin are as safe as any other birth control pill.

The SOGC advises all women who are currently using oral contraceptives to continue doing so as prescribed, unless experiencing complications. If there are any specific concerns regarding oral contraceptives, women are encouraged to speak to their health-care professional.

DONNA CAVE
Interim Director
University Health Centre

from THE web

Residents should realize students need to park

RE: ("Proposed CSJ parking lot faces community opposition," Simon Yackulic, December 13)

I can appreciate and understand some of the concerns of the residents in the area — having attended junior high and high school in Bonnie Doon, as well as having friends that live in the area, I know that parking is a huge issue. But at the same time, the opinion that students should just "stop driving" is ridiculous and incredibly shortsighted. If the suggestion were to be put to residents, that there's enough buses running to not require a car, it would be deemed illegitimate and ridiculous — so why not for students, both on campus and off?

Providing the minibus can only go so far, and until the city and region improves public transit, the need for parking will persist. Residents cannot even agree — there's enough parking in the community, yet there are complaints about bumper-to-bumper parking.

Public input is needed to ensure that opinions and concerns of the community are heard, and I'm glad that the university recognizes this (albeit late), but this whole NIMBY approach that is inherent in the Bonnie Doon area needs to be put to rest.

"KIM"
Via Internet

SU execs deserve a round of applause, and their raise

RE: ("SU executive earnings to increase next year," Aaron Yeo, December 2)

Being on the executive committee of

the SU is a lot different than being the president of the anime appreciation club. If you have the stress and responsibility of running a \$10M organization, you deserve legit remuneration.

As a former SU employee on salary, I can tell you that oftentimes after my hours were recorded and my cheque was in the bank, I was working for about \$3-5 an hour. I didn't put in nearly as many hours as my direct supervisor (a member of the SU exec). I am very in favour of this pay increase.

ANONYMOUS
Via Internet

Bylaw 3000 protects student fees from activists

RE: ("Critics call for repeal of bill limiting referenda," Simon Yackulic, December 2)

Bylaw 3000 does not revoke your right to hold a referendum. It simply adds a layer of checks and balances to make sure students' money is not being wasted. How is that wrong? Just because you want to save an African using money appropriated from student fees? How do you ignorant kids fail to see the ridiculousness of your struggle? Is Mark even a U of A undergrad student anymore?

"RH"
Via Internet

Letters to the editor should be sent to letters@gateway.ualberta.ca or delivered to SUB 3-04. Website comments may occasionally be printed. The Gateway reserves the right to edit letters for length and clarity, and to refuse publication of any letter it deems racist, sexist, libellous, or otherwise hateful in nature. Letters to the editor should be no longer than 400 words, and should include the author's name, program, and year of study to be considered for publication.

A smörgåsbord of campus clubs



MIKE
CHAFE

“But with so many choices, which was the right club for me: Ballroom dancing? Junior Communists? The Vietnamese Students’ Association? They all sounded so appealing. I quickly determined that my best course of action would be to sample a variety of groups and clubs in order to find my best fit.”

Man, time sure flies when you’re abusing heroin. I truly can’t believe the start of a new semester is upon us. In the course of my university career, I’ve found that it’s an extremely beneficial habit to stop and reflect on the lessons you’ve learned in the previous semesters. And in my time on campus, I’ve certainly learned some valuable lessons I feel are worth passing on.

For instance, it’s not a good idea to take mystery pills you find on the floor of the Pharmacy building. I’ve also learned that Campus Security displays a generally negative attitude towards student entrepreneurs running quasi-legal gambling operations on school property. And perhaps the most important lesson of all, I’ve learned there is a small but essential difference between standing against poverty and streaking against poverty. Boy, that was an awkward afternoon.

However, it’s now a new year and a new semester. With it comes a new me, and a chance to leave all these embarrassing misadventures behind. I have a good feeling this will be the year I reinvent myself into a better person. I’m going to eat more vegetables, run five miles a day, kick my addiction to ketamine, and finally pay off my mob debts.

The first step on my journey to becoming a better person involves

becoming more active within my community. And this time, I swear it’s going to be through means not sanctioned by a court order. This is why I’ve decided to join a student group here on campus. However, I’ve discovered this is no easy task. The U of A offers a vast plethora of groups and clubs for students to join.

But with so many choices, which was the right club for me: Ballroom dancing? Junior Communists? The Vietnamese Students’ Association? They all sounded so appealing. I quickly determined that my best course of action would be to sample a variety of groups and clubs in order to find my best fit.

First on my list was the outdoors club. At the first meeting I attended, I was taught some basic outdoor survival tips such as playing dead if I were to ever encounter a bear. Trying to be helpful, I remarked that the same technique can also be useful in situations such as an unwanted marriage or when Jehovah’s Witnesses come to your door. The grimacing faces staring back at me were all I needed to know I did not belong there.

Next was the vegetarian and vegans club. Wanting to make a good first impression, I was extremely proactive at my first meeting. I pitched some great ideas, like holding a campus-wide pig roast for our next

fundraiser, and proposed that in the future we should hold meetings at the local McDonald’s, as they make a great burger. Despite my attempts to contribute, I just sensed a vibe that I was unwanted.

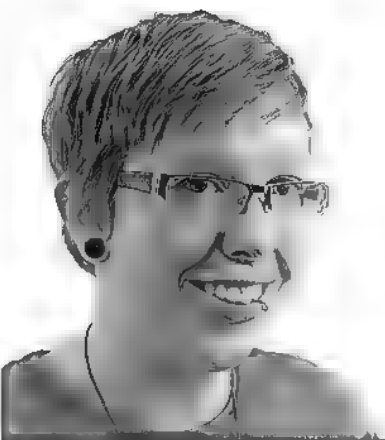
I was starting to lose hope. Every club I tried to join was flawed in some way. The Starcraft club crowd was too cool for me. The Atheists and Agnostics’ meeting conflicted with the Christians in Action Bible Study sessions. The Student Origami Association made fun of my stubby fingers. The Cardiovascular Health group told me I lacked heart, while the cheer team told me I lacked pep, whatever that is — maybe some kind of club drug.

I was heartbroken; my dream of finding a student club where I belong was dead, just like Bambi’s mom.

It was then I stumbled across the Korean Engineering Students’ Society. I was again optimistic that this was finally the group I was destined to be a part of. However, my application was swiftly denied on the basis that I am neither, nor an engineering student. Whatever — I didn’t want to be part of their snooty club anyways.

I guess there’s simply no place in this crazy world for a transient soul such as myself. Oh well, I suppose now I’ll have more time for my quasi-legal gambling schemes. You know, come to think of it, maybe I could start my own club.

Avoiding horrible diseases is harder than you’d think



ALIX
KEMP

A brand new study has discovered that — guess what — watching too much television is bad for you. Researchers in the U.K. found that people who watch TV, play video games, or even sit at the computer for more than two hours a day are more than twice as likely to die of heart-related problems.

Causes of cancer range from red meat, milk, bread, and vegetables, to oral sex. Oral sex — seriously. The point being: we’re completely fucked.

Apparently the act of “recreational sitting” is incredibly damaging to one’s health, so much so that researchers plan to lobby for public health guidelines to address the problem.

In response to these alarming findings, I’m sure that people will fling their laptops and flat-screen televisions out a window, or leave their game consoles to collect dust. Or maybe not. Lately, it seems that

everything is bad for you. Reading a book doesn’t protect you from the dangers of sitting. Alcohol and coffee will cause liver disease, heart disease, and anemia, while simultaneously reducing the risk of Parkinson’s disease and gallstones. Causes of cancer range from red meat, milk, bread, and vegetables, to oral sex. Oral sex — seriously. The point being: we’re completely fucked.

In a world of overblown health risks and rampant paranoia about obscure diseases, we’re doomed no matter what we do. And, it turns out, yet another cause of cancer is stress. We’d probably be a lot healthier — or at least happier — if we stopped obsessing over every potential cause of disease and focused on enjoying our lives as much as possible before we all develop necrotizing fasciitis or subacute sclerosing panencephalitis.

It’s this sort of paranoia that fuels a thousand ill-fated New Year’s resolutions to get healthier, eat better, and exercise more, lest we die horrible deaths from obesity or mad cow disease. Most of these fail horribly, leaving us with a sense of guilt as we gobble up another Big Mac in a vain attempt to console ourselves — or maybe that’s just me.

I mean, sure, heart disease is bad, and I’d rather not get throat cancer. On the other hand, giving up oral sex, cheeseburgers, movies, and beer doesn’t seem worth it. So I may develop acute pancreatitis and suffer a stroke at the age of 37, but at least I won’t live a dull, celibate life only to die from a case of vegetable-induced cancer.



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With the end approaching, let's start this party right



BRUCE
CINAMON

So far, 2011 doesn't seem like a terribly exciting year. The United Nations has declared it the International Year of Chemistry, which doesn't exactly seem like an auspicious beginning. Incidentally, we have just exited the International Year of Biodiversity, and 2009 was the International Year of Natural Fibres, so perhaps the "International Year" criteria is not the best judge of a year's character.

But as it stands, 2011 has scheduled no spectacle — there isn't the glory of the Summer Olympics nor the mild fun of the Winter Olympics, and there is neither the pageant of American elections nor the extravaganza of universal termination. But it shall be remembered, for what remains of our history, as the last full year of our world.

We have been told — on dubious authority, but informed nonetheless — that our world will cease to exist on December 21, 2012. Yes, this

prediction has been formed based on contradictory archeological information, wild extrapolation, and imaginative interpretation. Yes, it's been disavowed by the modern Mayan people, whose ancient calendar it is based on. And yes, it's also been rejected by scientists who compare it to Y2K paranoia, but since they were probably the ones who wanted a year named after fibre, I wouldn't much stock in their opinions on this matter.

But on December 20, 2012, even the most jaded skeptics among you will undoubtedly be out partying. Despite your eagerness to tell everyone that they are stupid sheep for believing the world will end, and that they should really be home studying, and making sure their diets contain sufficient amounts of fibre, you will nonetheless eat, drink, and make all sorts of merry. Just in case.

It's this "just-in-caseness" that will show your true desires and allow you to fulfill them. For too long, you have been denying yourself the pleasures and whims of the moment, setting them aside for an abstract future which promises happiness if you pay your dues. But what if there is no future, even if the possibility of apocalypse is tiny?

In just over two years, the world will end. Forever. There's no reason to wait until the last day to start the party. At this time of year, it's customary for people to make resolutions. The new year's promise of a fresh start seems like the perfect time in which to make a change. But this isn't a new beginning, ripe with promise. It's the beginning of the end.

The most common resolutions involve self-denial and self-perfection. "If only I had the willpower to go to the gym every day and lose 20 pounds," you say. Or, "If only I worked hard enough to attain a 4.7 GPA," you muse. "If only I found someone and finally, *finally* got laid," you lament. And even though all this plotting leads to abject misery, guilt, and failure in the present, at least someday you will reap the reward. Except that you won't.

Forget your resolutions. Instead, embrace all the pleasures you've denied yourself. If you must resolve, resolve to indulge. Throw yourself to the hedonistic winds. Live consequence free, safe in the knowledge that soon, none of it will matter.

If a classmate's being an inconsiderate little bitch, tell him how you feel. If you really want to eat all four of those frozen pies you've been saving in your freezer, heat 'em up. If you've been



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: PAUL SWANSON

THE END TIMES COMETH We're celebrating as early as possible.

crushing on a girl in your English class, confess your love. If she rejects you, tell her what an idiot she was for missing her chance.

Some readers might think this advice is premature. After all, the world won't end until 2012, they reason, so surely the celebration can wait until next New

Year's. But two years will pass in the blink of an eye — with that in mind, we should all start maximizing our hedonistic potential as early as possible. The only question, bearing in mind our world's imminent end, is this: what will you do with the time you have left?

social

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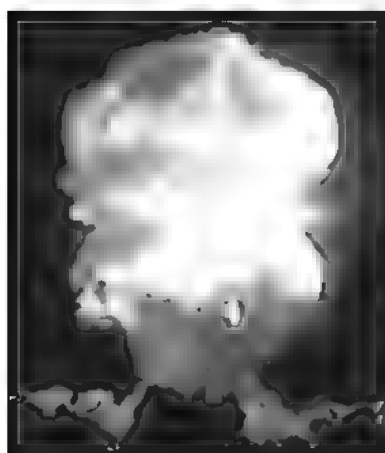
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Future of the U of A revealed



OPINION
STAFF

Group
Commentary

With the new year comes a host of new possibilities. After a rough few semesters at the University of Alberta, it's anyone's guess what the winter tem will bring. We've gathered a host of pundits, political experts, and psychics to postulate on what will happen this semester, so that you can be properly prepared for any eventuality.

Mike Chafe

Everyone needs an enemy. Superman has Lex Luther, Dora the Explorer has US Immigration, and as for me, I've been engaged in a long and vicious rivalry with the good folks at the Make-A-Wish Foundation. But when it comes to the U of A, clearly we have no greater enemy than Grant MacEwan University. I can't help but feel this rivalry is nearing the breaking point and that 2011 will be the year the U of A finally wages war against our intellectual enemies.

We've been engaged in an entrenched academic arms race with MacEwan for years: they built a fancy new downtown residence building, so we egged it; they boasted their small class sizes, so we dropped a giant pumpkin on a van; they earned university status, so we challenged them to a fight by the bike racks. It's a vicious cycle that is spiraling out of control faster than Speedy Gonzalez on meth.

As the situation is bound to escalate, I'd advise all students to start filling sandbags and storing canned goods for the impending crisis. Things are going to be tough on the home front for a while, but I'm sure we'll prevail. After all, we have a device that can drop giant pumpkins on things.

Justin Bell

The last year has been a difficult one for the university, with financial

problems forcing a number of austerity measures on the institution. Next year could be just as tough, as the administration struggles to pay the bills due to a low tuition increase and no extra funding from the province.

In order to get ahead, I believe the university will decide that this is the year to start branching out and looking at alternate revenue sources.

However, pitting students against each other in a form of gladiatorial combat and charging professors to watch will only get the institution so far, and labour laws may be a problem. And selling off naming rights to the Butterdome may have made sense at 3 a.m. during an administration planning session, but the 'Scoop Away Cat Litter' dome doesn't have the same ring.

Instead, the university will start sending administrative staff and professors on clandestine trips to Bogota, Colombia. They will be declaring their trips as pleasure and will return with anywhere from five to 10 kg of extra luggage each trip, which will be "processed," then sold in small packages for \$20 each.

Future "conference and consulting" destinations will include Afghanistan, Cambodia, and Burma.

Brad Chury

In 2010, the influx of females into this campus created an absurd gender ratio that's made it tough for bros city-wide to cope with university life, while the deficit caused the U of A to cut budgets and phone lines all over campus. How will the university be able to fix this in 2011? One word: strippers.

Ignoring the film *Showgirls*, anyone who even has a basic knowledge of Las Vegas knows that strippers sell. If an attractive female dry-humping a pole can put a man into a dingy hole in the wall, it sure as hell can put a man into a lecture hall. Or at least put them somewhere on campus. I mean, we can't have titanic tits titillating both guys and girls during an actual lecture. But if you park a couple poles in the middle of Tory Atrium, I guarantee that the installment fees for the poles and Cristal showering

bowls will pay for themselves within a month. It's this line of thinking that will inspire the U of A to change the name of CCIS to the Centennial Centre for Interdisciplinary Stripping.

Interdisciplinary Strippers means it's for the campus' benefit overall. Those toonies and loonies add up. Even a fair split with the performers will yield some baller cash for the university, and that doesn't even consider what all the lap dances for profs will do for morale after all those furlough days. That \$14-million deficit will be peeled back like a sweaty g-string from perv row. It doesn't get much simpler than engorging minds while engorging pants.

Ali Churchill

New Year's resolutions often carry the same theme, one of self-improvement. Lose that last 10 pounds, stop bringing home inappropriate partners, or, for the first time in four years, finish a textbook. For some of us, it's a Hail Mary to go out on a limb and discover new ways to improve one's wellbeing.

With that in mind, this lowly Gateway staffer has quested through philosophical discussions, alternative learning, and a harried Google search to humbly offer fellow students this year's most relevant campus prediction. The U of A's website supplied the photo, and I supplied the half-baked logic to bring you this gem: green and gold just really aren't our university's best colours.

Every time we try to recreate gold, it comes out as a murky yellow that remains stubbornly unkind to all. If we want to stagger out from under the university's debt, we need to do so with colours that reflect our Administration's goals for campus during this upcoming year. Surely President Samarasekera is aware of this, and it's my belief that this year we'll scrap the optimistic but unachievable gold, and go for a full Daddy Warbucks approach to a new paint job. Goodbye gold, hello Benjamins!

Let's just hope when my wildly accurate prophecy materializes that the cost of revamping the campus won't appear under "student fees."

THREELINESFREE

Got something that you need to get off your mind? Either email us at threelinesfree@gateway.ualberta.ca, tweet @threelinesfree, or message us at www.thegatewayonline.ca/threelinesfree

Hey profs - it's semester 2.wo and you haven't submitted final grades yet? Get w/tn'it!

Why is the balcony on the fourth floor of chem closed?! I'm out of a house and none!

Am I the only one who wonders how much tax Brad Chury actually gets?

Why do my friends keep moving farther away from me?!? [

An 'imperfect na'ku e' een, you are my baby monkey riding on a pig, going backwards

That was one of the best joke issues of *The Gateway* in a long time! Hilarious yet intelligent

I like the strawberry blonde girl...the one in Engineering and 2nd year...and who was working in Discover-E this summer. D I love strawberries in general

Steaming brown coffee
Revealing defecation
Today started right

Why do people obese? ... Hey baby, wanna have sex?

Is anyone else curious about what happened to that door inbetween HUB/Humanities?

The third floor of Cameron Library is a silent floor. Please respect that.

Dustin Penner looks like Stephen Harper

I am slowly being murdered by white chocolate covered cherries

Dear roommate,
Stop leaving the lights on, you bitch.

Who's idea was it to replace the regular computers on campus with thin clients? They suck.

Campus needs more ghost stories. I don't care if we have to make this snit up.

It's pretty standard for ward.

One person should not be allowed to take up 4 pieces of furniture in the freshman room. 10:30 am - 1:30 pm

The most annoying thing is when someone walks DIRECTLY behind you in a hallway that's 12 feet wide!

My quality of life has improved considerably ever since I started redirecting all emails from the engineering student societies into my spam folder. Seriously please learn the difference between reply and reply all and forward.

To the jerks who play starcraft in the libraries and computer labs on school computers, do you realize how irritating the constant clicking is? Click click click click click click click click

There is a special place in hell reserved for those who cut in front of the CAB Tim Horton's line-up.

Laser tag and the gay bar. That's my life.

Any government/council raises should be approved by the people who elected you. Not saying you don't deserve it, but coming up with your own wage in a public position needs to have some kind of reform to it

To the ppl complaining about the lack of microwaves...we get it. There are no microwaves. So stop bringing food that must be nuked, and stuff.

To the cunts behind you in cab, stop the repetition of the word cunt. Your conversation is an insult to my intelligence. Thanks.

Is anyone else just waiting for the zombie apocalypse to occur? I mean, if I don't get to kill a zombie in my lifetime...then why am I here? What's this all been about?

Why didn't the Brain simply snoot Pinky? He kept fucking everything up.

The Gateway reserves the right to edit any submissions, as well as refuse publication of any submission it deems racist, sexist, hateful, libellous, or overtly offensive. The Gateway cannot guarantee that your submission will be used (but we'll try). Submissions should be 130 characters max (including spaces).

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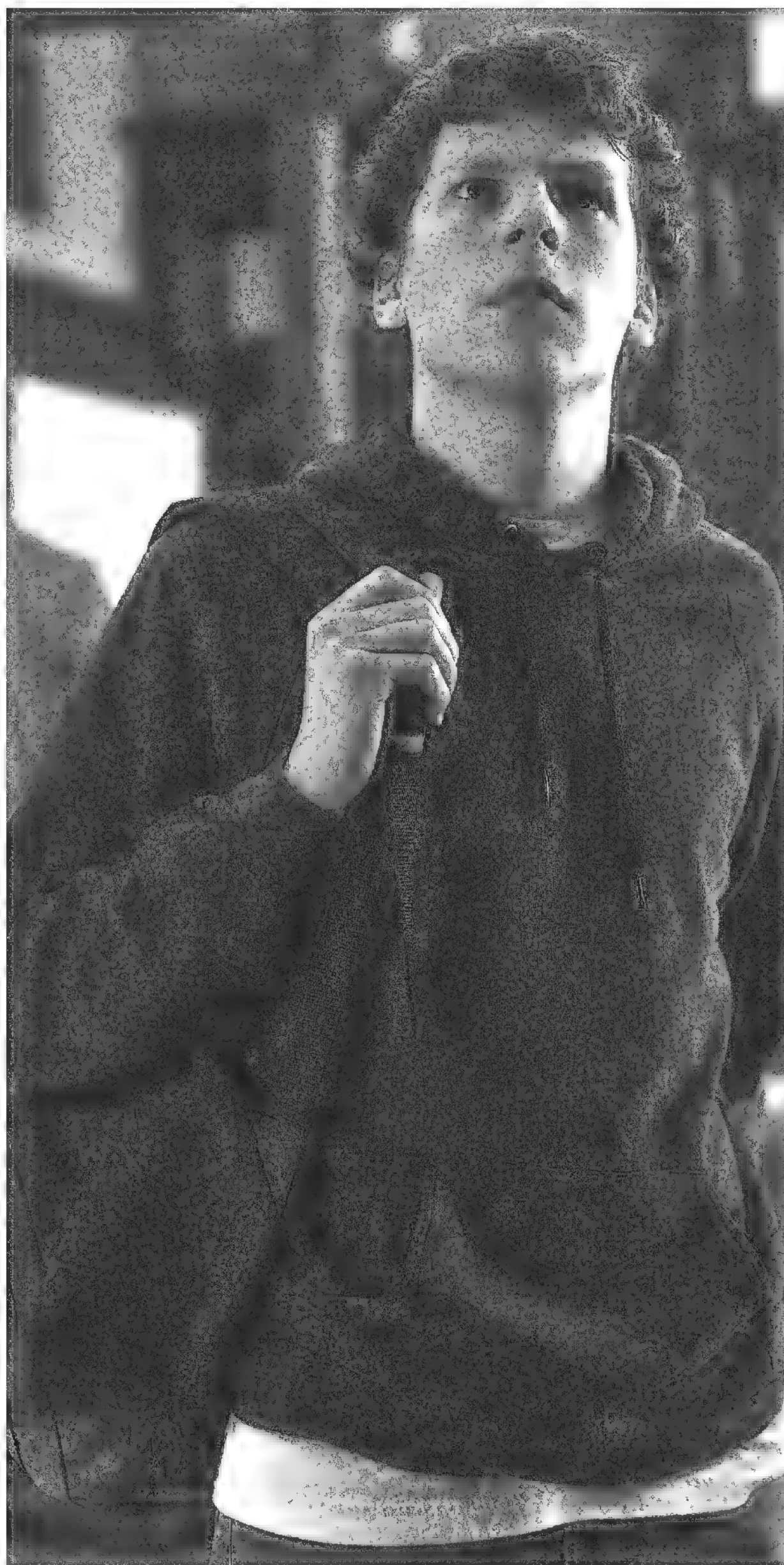
PREFERRED RESTAURANT

GSJS Special General Meeting

Tuesday, 25 January, 2010

6pm Room 3-04 Students' Union Building

TENTATIVE AGENDA:	All members (i.e., those with five or more Gateway contributions in the 365 days prior to 25 January and who have registered for membership with a Gateway editor, are asked to attend. If you have made five or more contributions to the Gateway in the 365 days prior to 25 January and would like to become a member, please contact the Editor in Chief at eic@gateway.ualberta.ca . This meeting is also open to the public.
1. Introductory remarks	
2. Voting for a new Volunteer Representative to represent Gateway volunteers on the GSJS board until the end of April 2011	
3. Discussion of potential changes to the operating structure of The Gateway in the 2011-2012 publishing year	
4. Refreshments	



The divine hands of fate finally stepped in to intervene, finally correcting the lives of all those insipid Disney creations and celebrities who are only famous for being famous slutbags. I sat back while Paris Hilton faced felony cocaine possession charges,

Lindsay Lohan bounced in and out of both jail and rehab, and Miley Cyrus was caught on video taking a hit from a bong and slurring her way into future obscurity.

It will be hard for 2011 to top what 2010 had to offer, but I can only hope it brings down more of those who deserve it, providing me with a healthy dose of schadenfreude.

Worst: Perfect love hits the rocks

I knew it had to happen. I didn't want it to happen, but deep down, I knew it couldn't last. And yet, for three glorious years, I still found solace in the fact that Ryan Reynolds and Scarlett Johansson, my two favourite celebrities — nay, people — were married and in love.

This gave me hope. I found myself believing that sometimes, good things really do happen to good people. The kind of perfection this couple embodied was truly inspiring, so it was with a heavy heart that I learned of R² and Scar-Jo filing for divorce in December.

The year may have had its great highs but it ended not with a bang, but with a whimper.

STEPHEN COOK

Best: The Trololo phenomenon

It was more than two decades ago that the communist utopia of the Soviet Union fell, yet even today many of its secrets are still hidden in underground bunkers and former czar vacation spots. Out of this ocean of the clandestine came the greatest pop culture phenomenon of 2010: the Trololo video.

Originally aired on a Russian television program in 1976 and rediscovered by the internet last year, the video features Eduard Khil dressed in a brown suit and mustard tie while wearing an indescribably creepy smile, singing a song without words. It is at once

a tribute to the beauty of the human voice and a decidedly powerful piece of nightmare fuel. Upon viewing, it is normal, as it is when anyone is faced with circumstances beyond their comprehension, to cry out desperately for some kind of reason.

There are the legitimate responses — ranging from Soviet censorship to a simple “fuck you” to the lyricist — but the truth is something one must, after excruciatingly painful bouts of existential agony, decide for themselves.

Worst: The final season of Lost

Although the season really began in 2009, the final season of *Lost* was undoubtedly a 2010 disaster. After five seasons of rip-roarin', time-travellin', sci-fi mystery, the sixth iteration of the confusing drama became a narrative about... magic, I guess? I don't know. There was a cave of light, or something. And some bullshit about purgatory.

Let's not kid ourselves, though. *Lost* was always about bullshit. When a mystery was solved, it spawned two more. Subplots were introduced and forgotten without much consequence. The final season, though, was supposed to provide us with some answers by merit of it being the *final* season, and the creators promised results. The reality was far different; they may as well have had the Smoke Monster disguise himself as Willy Wonka and scream, “You get nothing!” Even that would have been more satisfying. I mean, cave of light? Really?

RYAN BROMSGROVE

Best bad movie: Twilight: Eclipse

For a series built around romance, using a central couple who's any less interesting than Anakin and Padme is unforgivable. Nothing in the *Twilight*

universe will ever be good as long as Edward and Bella continue to be the focus, but what lifts *Eclipse* to a state of near-watchability is that the background characters and the subplots aren't, well, that bad.

Main character Bella is still being hunted by the evil Victoria, who is raising an army of powerful newborn vampires. The Cullens — “vegetarian vampires” who only prey on animals — forge an uneasy alliance with the werewolves of the super-hot Jacob clan to combat the threat. If you forget that the reason they are fighting is, as always, a blank slate for teenage girls to project themselves onto, it's actually kind of enjoyable. I can't in good faith recommend the movie, but I have to admit that it's progress.

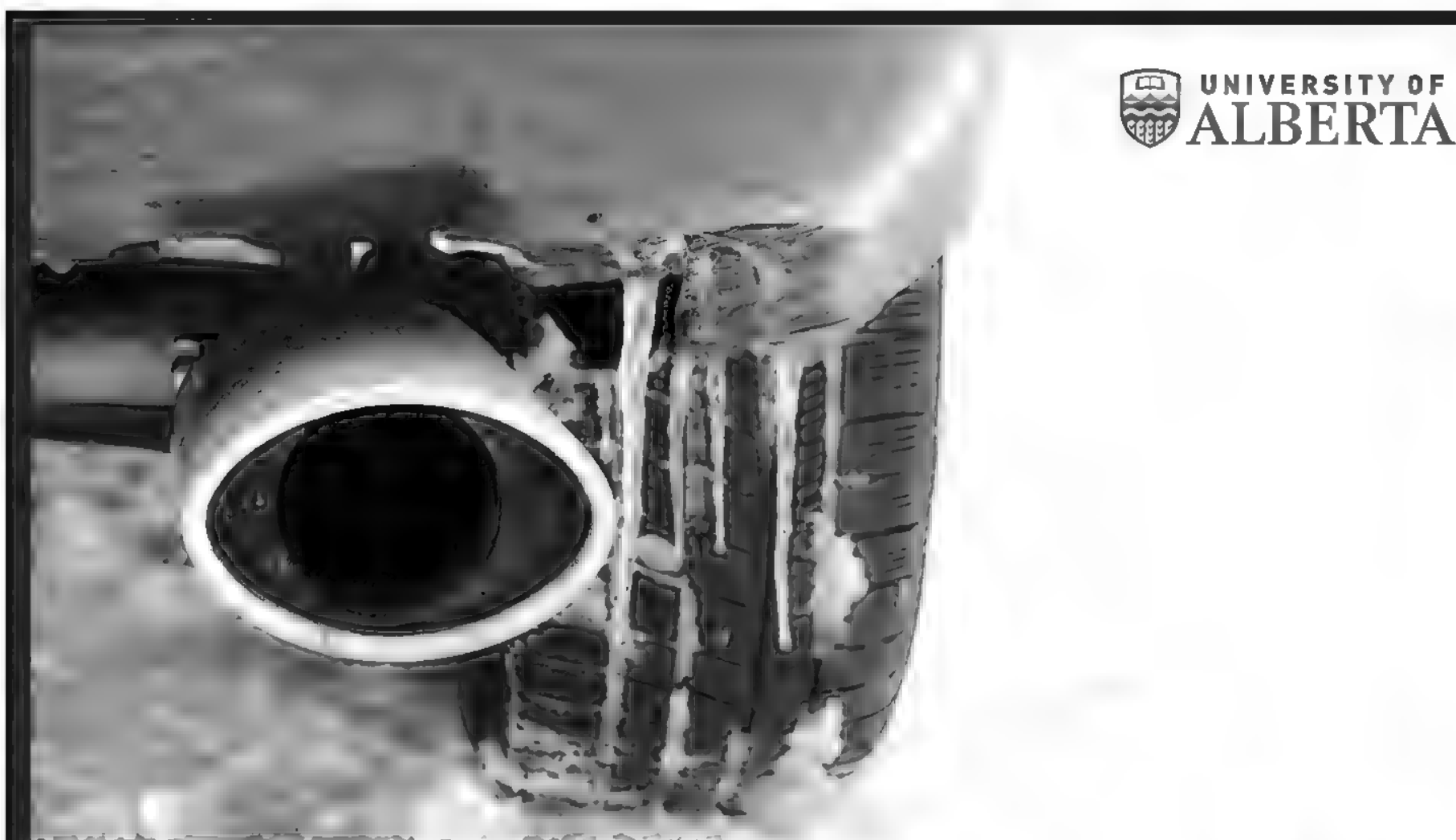
Worst bad movie:

The Last Airbender

The Last Airbender is horrible from start to finish. Director M. Night Shyamalan somehow took golden source material and managed to turn it into shit, a travesty done so thoroughly and efficiently that I can only conclude that he did it purposefully.

The plot is unspeakable. The dialogue dreams of being unspeakable. The characters' names are spoken, but even with three seasons of the show as guidance, nobody can get “Aang” right. There is nothing good here. Nothing.

This incarnation of *Avatar: The Last Airbender* can never be saved. The honourable thing to do is for someone who isn't dumb to reboot it immediately. But Shyamalan mercilessly wants a trilogy. He doesn't yet have the okay, but as we live in a world where the power of the name of a man who made one good movie is such that a \$280-million atrocity can make a profit, I fear that there is much worse still to come.



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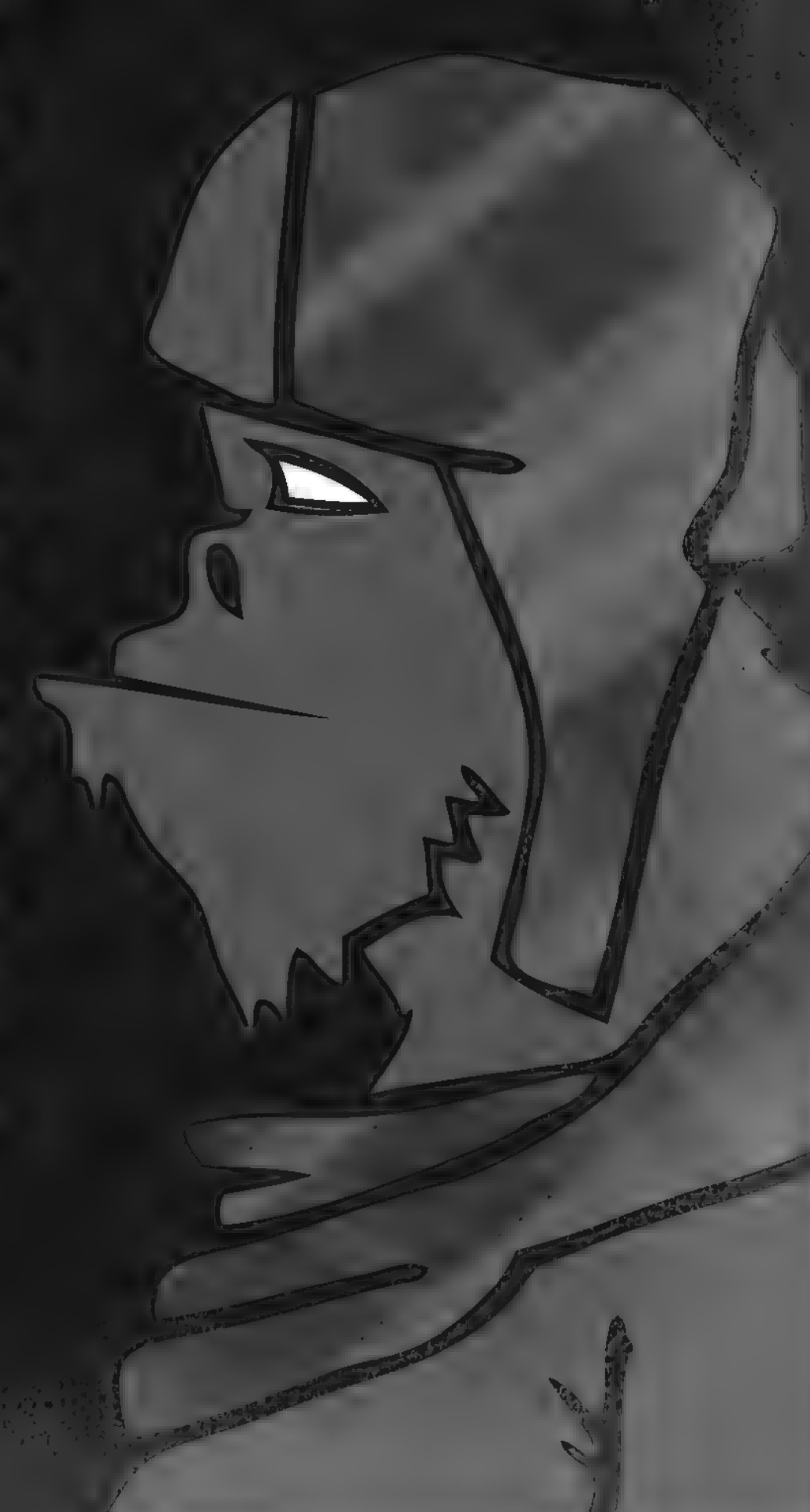
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A year at the controller proves that there are both ups and downs in the electronic world

JORDAN CHING



A&E Commentary

It's that time of year once again: people make and break resolutions in record time, large parties are thrown where people pretend to know the words to "Auld Lang Syne," and journalists make "best of" lists and "year in review" columns to feel important. That said, I'm not exactly above this sort of thing, and so here I present my opinions on a select few video games of 2010. Let's start with the less awesome end of the scale, shall we?

There were a lot of noteworthy releases this year, but the one surrounded by the greatest fanfare was *Call of Duty: Black Ops*. I don't pretend to understand the fanaticism around the franchise that compels people to buy virtually the same game every year, but I usually end up playing it anyways. For a game sold on its multiplayer component, the fact that my friends and I spent more time waiting to join games and swearing at error messages than playing was definitely a problem. Also considering the fact that it looks like a near-exact copy of *Modern Warfare 2*, *Black Ops* was definitely the most over-hyped game

of the year.

Coming in at a close second for this dubious honour, however, would be the long-delayed *Gran Turismo 5*. After several years in development, this was supposed to be the greatest racing game of the year. What we got instead was another *Gran Turismo 4* with some bits in HD. I spent a lot of time with the game, and was continually at odds with the clumsy menu system, unimpressive graphics, glaring balance issues, and a myriad of bewilderingly bad design choices.

There were a lot of games that were decidedly average over the last year as well. *Fallout: New Vegas* is an unfortunate example that springs to mind immediately. After 20 hours of play, the game just hadn't grabbed me the same way as *Fallout 3*. The gameplay, characters, and quests all felt too familiar, and though there were a few welcome tweaks to the formula, it didn't compel me to sink in the necessary time to see everything the way as its predecessor.

While it's fun to point out mediocrity, there were some genuinely excellent efforts produced from the past year that should be applauded. *Fable III* was finally the installment in the series that delivered most of what it had been promising for years. A refined combat system, a more engaging storyline, and a thoroughly satisfying transition from revolutionary to monarch all came together for an incredibly tight gaming experience.

The Microsoft Kinect was another pleasant surprise. The current library of titles hasn't quite convinced me to shell out the cash for one yet, but *Dance Central* was strangely addictive with its excellent tutorial mode and catchy soundtrack.

The plethora of people doing amazing things with the Kinect outside of games is staggering, from modeling 3D environments to implementing a full-on *Minority Report*-style user interface. Hopefully, this means that there's a lot of territory yet to be explored outside of fitness trainers and sports games.

Far and away the most outstanding title this year, however, was *Mass Effect 2*. An incredible story, the ability to import a save file from the prequel for continuity, and some extremely satisfying interactive cut scenes all made *Mass Effect 2* an immersive and nearly perfect game. To top this all off, the Edmonton-based developer BioWare followed up the release with some of the best downloadable content I've ever seen, cementing *Mass Effect 2* as one of the best games of all time.

So with the titles of 2010 now squared away, the big releases of 2011 are lining up to be mercilessly scrutinized for the benefit of journalists' egos everywhere. With *Infamous 2*, *Mass Effect 3*, *Bulletstorm*, and *Dragon Age 2* on the horizon, it's shaping up to be a good year for video games — one that's bound to be just as impressive as 2010.

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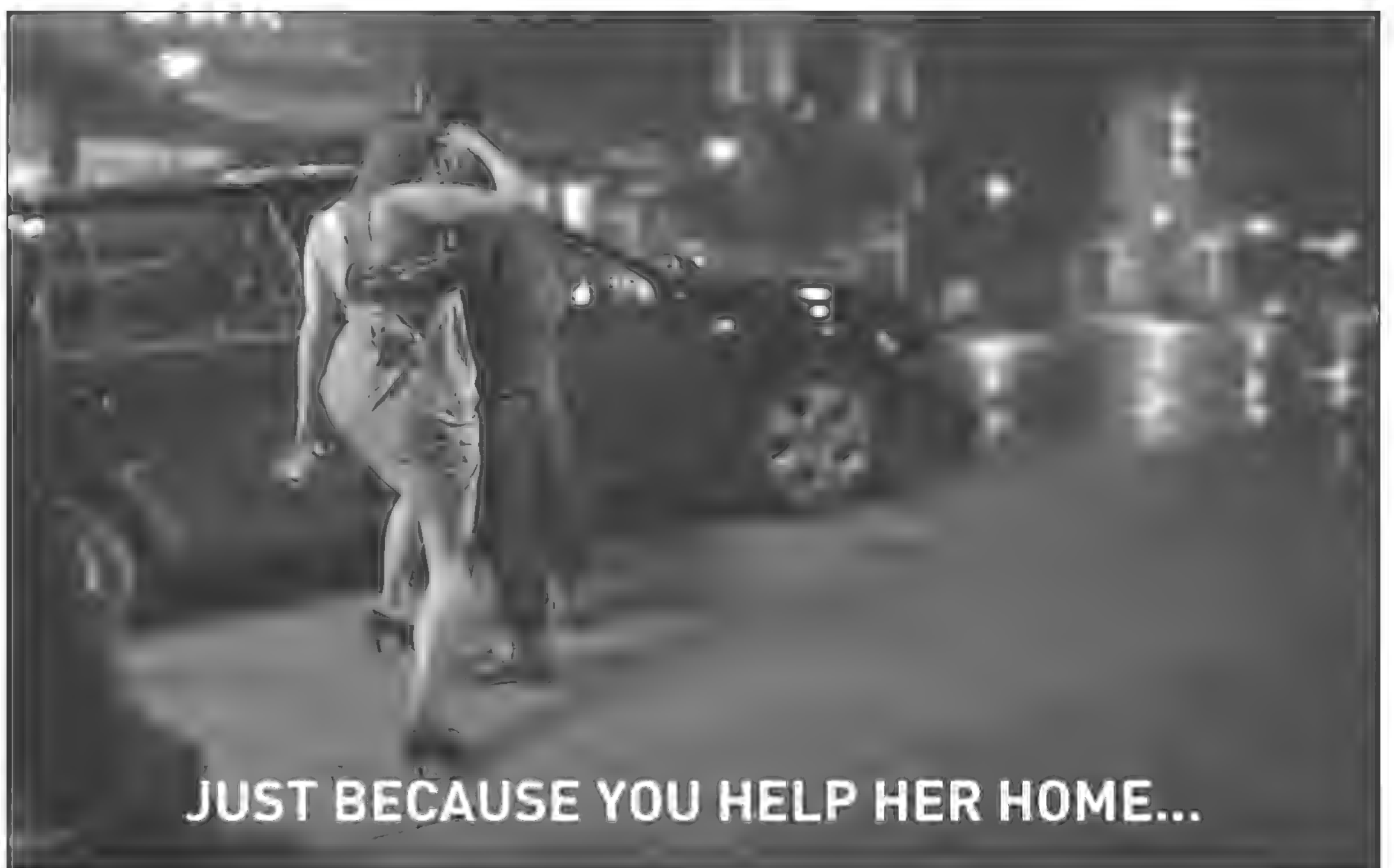
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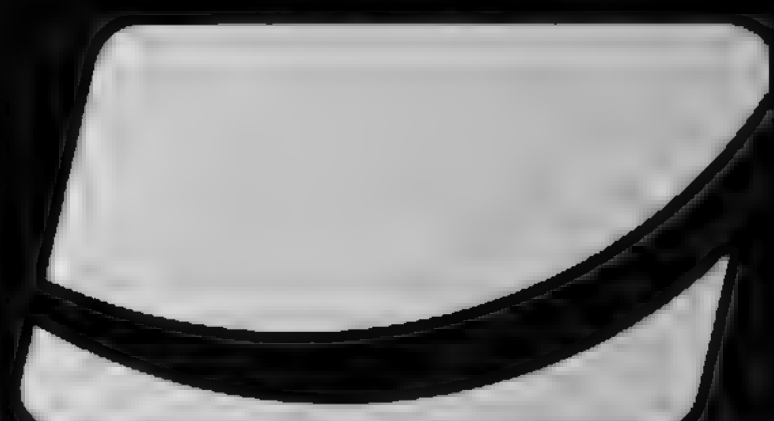
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SUPPLIED: RICO MORAN

Edmonton's average music prodigy

musicpreview

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MADLINE SMITH
Arts & Entertainment Editor

Rappers have been issuing hometown shout-outs in their music since the genre's birth, but most commercial rap typically references cities like New York, Chicago, or Los Angeles. Edmonton rapper Joe Gurba, however, makes songs dedicated to Klondike Days and Megatunes, or West Edmonton Mall and the Metro Cinema — inside jokes that Edmontonians appreciate on a deeper level than most. Gurba's lyrics are intricate and thought-provoking, covering everything from cheeky social commentary to more serious musings on religion and philosophy.

"I'm an odd character," Gurba shrugs, explaining the unique perspective that underlies his music. "I've had an odd upbringing and an odd life. There aren't too many people that have the same equation as I do."

That equation includes a mid-childhood conversion to Christianity, a strong commitment to both spirituality and Edmonton's counter-culture during his adult life, and a deep love of literature.

"My real passion is creative writing, like short fiction and poetry," Gurba says. "There have been many times where I've just considered quitting rap because it takes all my energy, but it also makes all my money," he laughs. "My poetry is stronger when I perform it anyway."

Gurba has been performing the poetry from his upcoming album *Float or Flail* for years, but its official release had to be postponed while he worked to raise the funds needed to distribute it, making other songs from his catalogue available along the way. As a result, the album is full of songs that are almost five years old, creating a revealing snapshot of Gurba's late teens and early twenties.

"The point of the album, originally, was to be extremely fun to play at shows," Gurba, now 24, explains. "I wrote the majority of it in the fall of 2006, and then I went through about a year of depression — emotional puberty, I suppose. Men hit it at 20. And at the end of that, I wrote all the harder songs, the ones with more gravity."

"So I had these two very opposite forces in my life: to float or to flail. But if I didn't do one or the other, I felt like I was drowning; in just a mediocre, regular life, I felt like I was sinking."

JOE GURBA
THE JOE

"It fits perfectly with the concept behind [*Float or Flail*]," he continues. "I can't swim at all, and I was having these dreams of being dropped in water. My options [in life] were to either float in an ascetic lifestyle — and I was moving into this time of asceticism where I was really obsessed with monasticism and a life of solitude and quietude — or pursue this incredible urge to be a mover and a shaker, which is what I do most often

now. I wanted to put on shows, meet everyone, live a life of consequence, and enjoy the people in the world.

"So I had these two very opposite forces in my life: to float or to flail. But if I didn't do one or the other, I felt like I was drowning; in just a mediocre, regular life, I felt like I was sinking."

Gurba's life now is far from ordinary; he's successfully established his own corner in Edmonton's rapidly growing arts scene, both with his own music and the artists he promotes on his own record label, Old Ugly.

"We're awesome," Gurba says with a grin, describing the circle of friends that make up the Old Ugly family. "It's not that hard to have a significant role and help keep the wheels moving in a town this small. [...] I can get a bunch of people together and make a website [for my record label], and there you go, we're a major part of the scene, because who else is doing it?"

In addition to contributing to his lyrical content, the openness of Edmonton's music scene has been a huge part of Gurba's success. Unlike many who feel the urge to leave a relatively small, isolated city for the more well-known arts communities in larger metropolises like Toronto or Vancouver, Gurba is content to stay in his hometown.

"I don't want to do anything outside the city," Gurba says. "Here, I like walking down Whyte Avenue and knowing everyone. There's no point having people on Yonge Street [in Toronto] knowing who I am, because I'm not there, and I don't plan on being there."

Gurba's plans for his future career, then, are very simple.

"I could be so happy just being here forever and putting on shitty little house shows, because they're so fun. I just like being with my friends and getting drunk and making music."

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Baptized In Blood
Baptized In Blood
Roadrunner Records

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VS

Common Grackle
The Great Depression
Fake Four Inc.



GRANT CRAWFORD
Arts & Entertainment Staff

The plan: pick two albums and pit them against each other in a gruesome deathmatch until a victor emerges. There can be only one.

Best Album Cover

Common Grackle: Yes, it is a "Common Grackle," but this Grackle clearly doesn't take shit from anyone, sporting a shotgun, hip waders, and those giant creepy bird eyes that scream merciless killer. And he's smoking — yes, his life is so stressful that he needs a pack of menthols to take it on.

Baptized In Blood: Remember when it wasn't safe to go in the water? That was more than a quarter century ago. Sharks from the '80s aren't scary anymore.

Verdict: Common Grackle takes it by force.

Best Album Title

Common Grackle: The album cover alone is enough to elicit some of the aforementioned depression, yet *The Great Depression* is an awful title

because they actually are depressed, and no one wants to see that.

Baptized In Blood: Sure, it might be thicker than water, but real men are baptized in battery acid.

Verdict: Clearly a battle of squandered potential, a reluctant point is awarded to Baptized In Blood.

Best Track Title

Common Grackle:
"Hannibal Lecture"

This track is just over a minute long, and the nonsensical lyrics prove that the band was just looking for an excuse, rather than providing a reason for a track titled "Hannibal Lecture."

Baptized In Blood:
"Up Shirts Down Skirts"

It's what the audience is already thinking, and BIB is going to give it to them. Of course, this is a heavy metal band we're dealing with, so we're about to head up the shirts of a bunch of sweaty guys. Finding the skirts to go down, however, may prove more difficult.

Verdict: Baptized In Blood wins a decisive victory over Common

Grackle's failed attempt at being clever.

Greatest Lyrical Metaphor

Common Grackle: "Bitch, how am I going to score?"

Bitch, please.

Baptized In Blood: "Fuck rubbers, I think they suck/I'm not wearing 'em when we go fuck."

In this line, rubbers is clearly a reference to the cold emotional detachment of the narrator's girlfriend. As such, our narrator is making a heartfelt plea for a more romantic love from a partner who is afraid of commitment and children.

Verdict: Move over, Shakespeare; the English language is getting worked harder than one of Baptized In Blood's groupies.

Final Verdict

Musically, these are two very different groups, but in the album battle arena, the sheer speed metal decadence of *Baptized In Blood* allows it to easily dismantle the confused and depressed waffling of Common Grackle.

FLOP CULTURE

Bizarre. That's the only way to describe the list of nominees for the annual Golden Globe Awards taking place on Sunday. The nominations this year seem dead set on making the awards so clearly ridiculous that they might finally find the one thing they've always been lacking: public interest.

Year after year, the Golden Globes are televised to an apathetic audience, most of whom likely tune in to have something in the background while they're vacuuming, or solely to see the annual drunken rantings of Ricky Gervais, easily the most entertaining part of the show.

Besides that, all you really get are a few excited actors who probably fantasize about winning an Emmy or an Oscar instead. In fact, the Golden Globes are generally only regarded with any importance as a predictor for the truly important Academy Awards.

But this year is different. The nominations are so ludicrous that the only possible explanation must be that they're doing it for publicity. While the Best Drama nominees are the same films predicted for months as potential Oscar contenders, the Best Comedy/Musical nominees

include terribly reviewed films like *Burlesque*, along with movies that aren't actually comedies or musicals: *Alice In Wonderland*, a laughably bad attempt at a fantasy film; *The Tourist*, a tedious thriller; and *Red*, a wacky action movie.

Alongside these films, best actor/actress nominations in the comedy/musical category were given to lacklustre performances from stars like Angelina Jolie and Johnny Depp for movies that, once again, weren't even comedies.

This year's awards seem geared to pander to new viewers, but this seems like a better year than any to skip the ceremony. The new tactics will likely only bring in a few more jokes at their expense from Mr. Gervais and give viewers yet another reason to remain apathetic.

However, the Globes aren't entirely to blame: these nominations reveal that 2010 was an astoundingly boring year for comedy.

Apparently, no films were produced that actually deserved to receive nominations this year, leaving these ridiculous substitutes as the sole pathetic punchline.

ANDREW JEFFREY

Flop Culture is a semi-regular feature in which Gateway pop culture pundits shake their literary fists at ridiculous events or celebrities deserving of an inky bitch-slap.

the GATEWAY investigates
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FILEPHOTOS: DANIELLE JENSON, AARON YEO

Volleyball squads open second half poised for playoff run

Pandas hope to continue winning ways after a breakthrough

volleyballpreview

Pandas vs. Regina Cougars

January 14-15, 8 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. respectively
Main Gym

MATT HIRJI
Sports Editor

As the sun rises on the second half of the CIS season, the Pandas volleyball squad will look to make a dent in the Canada West standings this weekend as they face off against the Regina Cougars in the Main Gym.

“It’s just a recognition of what pressure does to you and how it affects you and the team[...] You can’t play afraid, you can’t play to not lose.”

LAURIE EISLER
HEAD COACH, PANDAS VOLLEYBALL

The Green and Gold, who dropped their first three games of the regular season, made a breakthrough in the in the middle of November by beating the previously undefeated Trinity Western Spartans. After that game, the Pandas have put on a charge, winning three consecutive matches, including a non-conference game against their provincial rivals the Calgary Dinos last Friday. The breakthrough, as head coach Laurie Eisler asserts, was a matter of developing the team’s maturity and steadfast presence on the court.

“It was just a recognition of what pressure does to you and how it affects you and the team,” Eisler explained. “We have dealt with [those problems] square on — you can’t play afraid, you can’t play to not lose. You’ve got to live on your energy and hang tough. Coaches can talk until you’re blue in the face, but athletes really need to experience it and find the solutions to it because it’s a learning process.”

While the mighty Green and Gold have managed to salvage their season and are currently poised for a strong campaign into the playoffs, there are still challenges ahead. The difficult path to claiming the national championships is further complicated by an ultra competitive Canada West division with many strong teams looking to return to national prominence.

This weekend’s series against the Cougars will provide an accurate picture of the challenges that the Pandas have ahead of them. The Cougars, while only holding a 5-3 record, are fielding a veteran team that qualified for the national championship last year. But Eisler is confident that her powerful and hungry, albeit young, team can negotiate their way through the rest of the season.

“You have to recruit the players that want to win. I don’t think that it’s something that you can pull out of people — they either have it or they don’t. I can tell you that this group of athletes has nationals circled on their calendars,” Eisler said. “That’s the purpose for all the hard work and the sacrifices that we make along the way to achieve those ultimate goals and be a national champion. Along the way, you have to win games and you have to earn your way there.”

With only 10 games remaining in the regular season, the Pandas are now beginning the process of honing their game in preparation for the playoffs in mid- February. The team has a tremendous amount of confidence moving forward; however, the key will be to maintain and build upon the foundation created last semester while putting in a consistent effort as the stakes increase.

“It comes down to maintaining that consistency of a high level of play. You just can’t get away with having lapses in performance because opponents are going to make you pay for that. Really, the difference between winning and losing is so small that you have to be able to access your best game all the time,” Eisler said.

“We always intend to win every match and every point we are in. I wouldn’t put any limits on this team. Rome wasn’t built in a day. It takes time, and when you are up against such a tough standard, it’s a process, but there isn’t any quit on this team.”

Bears look for consistency after exhibition matches in California

volleyballpreview

Bears vs. Regina Cougars

January 14-15, 6:30 p.m. and 8 p.m. respectively
Main Gym

MATT HIRJI
Sports Editor

After enjoying the sunny skies of southern California during a three game exhibition road trip earlier this month, the Golden Bears volleyball squad return to the more familiar surroundings of the Main Gym this weekend to face off with the ice cold Regina Cougars to begin their quest for Canada West glory.

Despite losing all their exhibition games in California to three formidable opponents, the Bears are still poised to make a successful bid for the divisional playoffs in mid-February. As head coach Terry Danyluk explained, his team is hoping to harness the lessons learned in their matches south of the border in the hopes of a successful campaign this weekend.

“The California trip was one where there was a lot of things compacted with a lot of travel time,” Danyluk said. “Nothing is easy to do in Los Angeles. Nothing takes 10 minutes there. It’s one of those trips where you have to be very adaptive. But, we knew that we would have good competition there and that’s what we got. It was a good learning experience for our guys.”

Entering the weekend with a stellar 7-1 conference record, the Bears’ offensive firepower and remarkable team cohesiveness has proven to be a dynamic combination so far this season. While they may not have been able to come away with a victory south of the border, they were able to work on aspects of their game to shore up their defence and maintain their offensive intensity.

The Cougars, however, sit on the opposite side of the Canada West spectrum. With a record of 1-7, the scrappy Cats have struggled in the competitive Canada West division, despite moments of brilliance. On paper the weekend match between the Bears and Cougars appears

to offer the Bears an easy road to a series sweep, but coach Danyluk and the Bears are acutely aware of the Cougars ability to pounce if they’re not prepared.

“It’s something that we have talked about for years here. It doesn’t matter who you’re playing, any team that comes ready to play can beat you on any night. Regina is no exception. They have played some teams really tough this season, and if you’re not careful, it could happen to you. For us, our guys have to focus on their own performance and if they do that, the opponent really just becomes a secondary factor,” Danyluk said.

“It’s something that we have talked about for years here. It doesn’t matter who your playing, any team can beat on on any night.”

TERRY DANYLUK
HEAD COACH, BEARS VOLLEYBALL

A key to success for the Bears moving forward will be to improve their consistency against the powerful opponents featured in the Canada West. This season, the Bears have had a tendency to relax against opponents with weak records, making mental errors and providing opportunities for their opponents to capitalize on. If the Bears hope to be successful in the second half of the season, they will have to battle not only their volatile opponents but also their habit of putting forth a substandard effort on the court.

“In volleyball, the nature of the game is about efficiency. You want to do things well, you want to make fewer errors than your opponent and be good and things like your side out and serving,” Danyluk said. “Often times, teams who make the most mistakes in those areas are the ones that lose games. For us, we need to cut down on errors. The teams that get the best at bat in men’s volleyball are the ones who win at the end of the year.”



FILE PHOTO: PETE YEE

Pandas roar into second half by downing the T'birds

hockeyroundup

JUSTIN BELL
Managing Editor

The Pandas hockey team got the boost they were looking for this weekend with two wins against the UBC Thunderbirds.

The team managed to maintain their lead in the Canada West standings with their victories, downing the Thunderbirds by a combined score of 9-1 over the weekend. Both Pandas goalies, Kanesa Shwetz and Michala Jeffries, picked up wins on the weekend, playing with the team attitude head coach Howie Draper is looking for.

"I felt like the team effort was outstanding

this past weekend," said Draper. "Everybody seems energized and very engaged, very focused on the second half of the season and hopefully achieving the goals that we set out. Maybe it's because they are well rested and it's easier to have those things when you have had a little time away."

The wins come after a disappointing end to the first half of the season. The team lost four of five games heading into the new year, including two at a tournament in Winnipeg.

But it wasn't a complete disaster for the Pandas. They got a chance to compare themselves to the McGill Martlets, a team they won't see at all in the regular season, in an exhibition match.

"If things go the way we hope, there's a chance we may see them at nationals," Howie

Draper explained.

The women's team has eight games left before the end of the regular season, hoping to stay one step ahead of their competition and keep their top spot in the Canada West. For Draper, that means competing more as a team rather than looking to any one player.

"I think we need better team play in general. I don't think there's going to be a superstar leading the way. We want to see the girls play a better team game together."

He also pointed to a need for the team to move at a quicker tempo, getting onto the attack at a higher speed. He wants the team to attack opponents defensively and get more pressure going on the ice.

With only four teams in the Canada West will qualifying for the playoffs, and the top two teams

going to the nationals at Wilfred Laurier, the urgency to finish in the top echelon of the competitive conference is increasingly important.

Every game from now until the end of season will be "playoff hockey," Draper said.

"We have talked about every game from here on being a playoff game. We are so close, from a points standpoint, with Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Calgary. You never know what might happen."

The team will want to stay in the top half of the league. Even then, it could be tough to say who will come out of the historically strong Canada West conference as the post-season plays itself out.

The Pandas will continue their quest for Canada West domination this weekend as they take on the Lethbridge Pronghorns at Clare Drake Arena.



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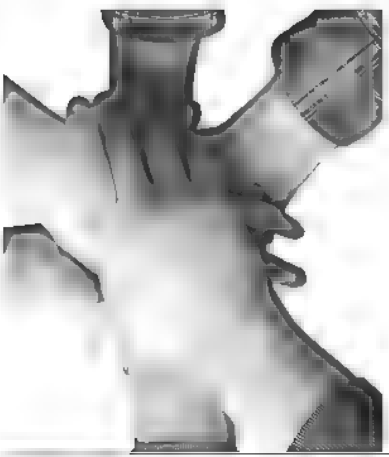
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2010: it was the best of times, it was the blurst of times



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Group
Commentary

From free kicks to television specials, *The Gateway* sports staff reflects on the most interesting sports stories of 2010.

Justin Bell
2010 South Africa World Cup

Sitting in a veritable winter shitstorm, it's hard to remember that once, way back when, it was summer. At a point in history not that long ago, green grass proliferated and we all enjoyed sitting on patios enjoying the weather while watching the great game of soccer unfold majestically in front of the world's eyes.

Amidst the powerful roar of the vuvuzela, the African continent hosted its first World Cup, an impressive affair in the gorgeous country of South Africa. Pundits said the country wouldn't be ready in time — and they were almost proved right — but the event went off without a hitch. Spain proved their mettle, playing a team game that earned them the cup. The host, Bafana Bafana, dazzled a home crowd even though they weren't expected to win a single game. And the English squad proved that a cobbled-together amalgamation of big names doesn't necessarily make for a successful World Cup team.

More impressive was the hosting of the events. South Africa proved that you don't have to be a massive Western country in order to succeed — the little guy can do it, too. Brazil will host the next event in four years, and expectations are sure to be high.

FIFA also awarded tournaments to Russia and Qatar in 2018 and 20102 respectively this

summer. While the process was criticized and the bids were likely awarded in part because of some “extras” provided to judges, the two hosts will hopefully put on a successful event.

This year was proof that it takes more than a big budget to put on a big show. South Africa did it with some elbow grease and a huge heart.

Nick Frost
Lebron James moves to South Beach

On July 8, society stooped to a series of new lows.

In front a television audience of nearly 10 million Americans, the NBA's golden boy LeBron James spent all of eight seconds revealing that he would be “taking his talents to South Beach” and signing with the Miami Heat in *The Decision*: a 73-minute *tour de force* of pomp and arrogance.

It was some of the most poorly thought-out programming ESPN has ever signed off on.

James' decision, all at once, precipitated one of the most feared trios in basketball, tarnished his image as a loyal hometown hero, and gave everyone a reason to resume not caring about the city of Cleveland.

This meant the former Cavaliers star would be slated to join the former Toronto Raptors star Chris Bosh and Heat guard Dwyane Wade, who re-signed with the franchise. In effect, the decision gave Miami its own “three-headed monster” like that of the Boston Celtics, and saw two more smaller-market stars gang up to form a juggernaut in one of the NBA's largest markets.

Of course, in everywhere but Miami, reactions sparked by James' decision were about as classy as one would expect. Cavs majority owner Dan Gilbert pulled out his finest Comic Sans quill and penned a vitriolic open letter aimed at LeBron. Filled with hollow martyrdom and idealistic promises, Gilbert noted James' betrayal and guaranteed Cleveland would win an NBA Championship before James did. Good luck with that.

Gilbert even went as far as to change the team's

uniforms as a means of putting the LeBron era behind them.

In James' hometown of Akron and across Ohio, former fans quickly put seven years of success out of their minds by burning jerseys bearing his name on live television.

Even in major market New York, where James' services had been coveted, fans and sports writers alike felt slighted when Mayor Bloomberg's video testimonial displaying the city's desperation for the superstar failed to yield results.

But LeBron doesn't care about any of that. His team is winning. He's in Miami, trick.

Evan Daum
2010 Olympics

Few sporting events have been as galvanizing for the Canadian psyche as the 2010 Winter Olympics. For 17 days in February, the nation's eyes turned to British Columbia. By the time the Olympic Torch had been extinguished, Vancouver had secured its place not only as the defining Canadian sporting moment of 2010, but also of a generation.

Despite snow problems at Cypress Hill and tragedy on the luge track, Vancouver surpassed expectations on so many levels. Few would have forecasted the outpouring of patriotism that Canadians exhibited during the Games for their Olympic heroes.

Beginning with Spruce Grove's Jennifer Heil and her silver medal in women's moguls — the first medal of the games for the Red and White — to Sidney Crosby and the golden goal in overtime to lift Canada to gold in men's hockey, Canadian athletes performed at a level never before seen on the international stage.

With 26 total medals — 14 gold, the most golds ever won at a Winter Olympics for any nation — Canadian athletes made the Vancouver games one to remember. As magical as the games were from a spectacle standpoint, it was the success of our own athletes that captured Canada's collective imagination, as Canadians from coast-

to-coast watched Canada's crowning athletic moment unfold.

While Canada fell short of the Own the Podium goal of most total medals, events like men's ice hockey helped Canada own the international spotlight for 17 days. For instant in time, sport was more than just a competition, and became part of our national identity.

Matt Hirji
Alexandre Bilodeau claims gold on home soil

On the first Sunday of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic games, Alexandre Bilodeau made Canadian history. With an awe-inspiring backflip and a near-perfect sprint down the mogul-riddled course at Cypress Mountain above the city lights of Vancouver, Bilodeau became the first Canuck ever to win an Olympic gold medal in a Games held on home soil.

It was a long-awaited achievement, and a more inspiring person couldn't have claimed the moment. As a child, Bilodeau quit his first love of hockey after realizing that his older brother Frédéric could not play the sport because of his advancing cerebral palsy. Hoping to support his brother, Alexandre took up skiing so that the two brothers could participate in an activity together.

Years later, it was Frédéric who was providing his younger brother with the support and inspiration needed to take home an Olympic championship. In the grandstands at Cypress Mountain, Frédéric was cheering on his sibling with the combined enthusiasm of every Canadian watching that night. It was a wondrous moment as the Bilodeau family celebrated history with the rest of Canada.

Seven years ago, when Vancouver was awarded the games, curious Canadians from across the country began the long wait to see whom the first Canadian would be to stand atop the podium in British Columbia. The answer to this question was my favourite sports story of 2010.



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With Winter semester in full swing, you could either be in class or outside freezing your ass off, or you could be up at The Gateway's office, where we're looking for writers, photographers, and illustrators to help us out with the paper this semester. And don't worry if you don't have any experience — we'll show you the ropes. You just have to show up.

So come to the third floor of SUB and see what newspapering is all about. We even have a fireplace.* And if you have any questions, email gateway@gateway.ualberta.ca

MEETING TIMES:

Arts & Entertainment
Tuesday at 5 p.m.

Photo
Friday at 4 p.m.

Sports
Thursday at 4 p.m.

Opinion
Thursday at 5 p.m.

Features
Thursday at 6 p.m.

News
Fridays at 3 p.m.

Comics/Illustrations
Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m.

*Fireplace consists of flaming oil drum fuelled by masterpieces of the English language.

THE GATEWAY: Exploiting boredom and cold to foster talent since 1910



FILEPHOTOS: PETE YEE

KICK, SET, SKATE, TACKLE The Green and Gold varsity teams scored success during 2010, racking up a women's hockey national championship and three Canada West titles. Individual and team achievements abound, there was more than enough high-flying action to slap your stick at. *The Gateway* wishes all the Green and Gold athletes the best for 2011. Now get out there and beat those Dinos.

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posed to be
having fun. They
have something
to do that is like
a friendly imita-
tion of work:
they can take
pictures."

— Susan
Sontag

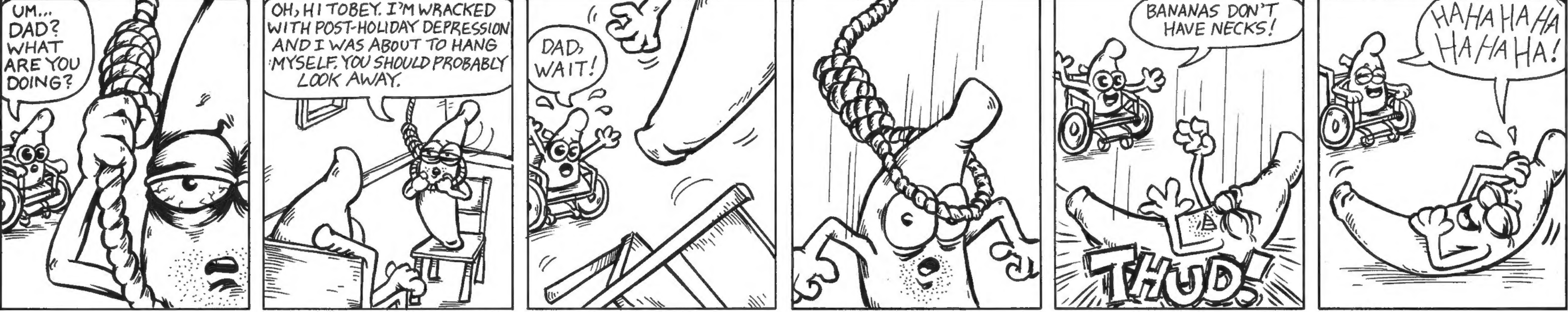
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Pretending to work since 1910

Photo meetings begin next
Friday, January 21 at 4 p.m.

ID & EGO by Lauren Alston



SINGLE DAD BANANA by Benjamin Ripley



DICK AND DOUCHE by Benjamin Nay and Brad Chury



METALEETO by Ross Vincent



PEOPLE WATCHING by Faye Campbell



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6. Steal their money when they're taking a leak. If that doesn't work, use your 9mm to shoot them.



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Sat Feb 5	7:30 PM	Regina	
Fri Feb 18	7:30 PM	Manitoba	
Sat Feb 19	7:30 PM	Manitoba	

CANADA WEST PLAYOFFS

Mar 4 - 6	Semi-Finals
Mar 11 - 13	Finals

CIS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Mar 24 - 27	University Cup @ UNB (Fredericton)
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PANDAS HOCKEY

CANADA WEST CONFERENCE GAMES

PANDAS		VS	
Fri Jan 14	7:00 PM	Lethbridge	
Sat Jan 15	7:00 PM	Lethbridge	
Sat Jan 22	7:00 PM	Calgary	
Fri Feb 11	7:00 PM	Saskatchewan	
Sat Feb 12	7:00 PM	Saskatchewan	

CANADA WEST PLAYOFFS

Feb 18 - 20	Semi-Finals
Feb 25 - 27	Finals

CIS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Mar 10 - 13	@ Wilfrid Laurier (Waterloo)
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GOLDEN BEARS VOLLEYBALL

CANADA WEST CONFERENCE GAMES

GOLDEN BEARS		VS	
Fri Jan 14	6:30 PM	Regina	
Sat Jan 15	8:00 PM	Regina	
Fri Feb 4	6:30 PM	Saskatchewan	
Sat Feb 5	8:00 PM	Saskatchewan	

CANADA WEST PLAYOFFS

Feb 18 - 20	Quarter Finals
Feb 25 - 26	Final Four

CIS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mar 4 - 6	@ Trinity Western (Langley)
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PANDAS VOLLEYBALL

CANADA WEST CONFERENCE GAMES

PANDAS		VS	
Fri Jan 14	8:00 PM	Regina	
Sat Jan 15	6:30 PM	Regina	
Fri Feb 4	8:00 PM	Saskatchewan	
Sat Feb 5	6:30 PM	Saskatchewan	

CANADA WEST PLAYOFFS

Feb 18 - 20	Quarter Finals
Feb 25 - 26	Final Four

CIS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mar 4 - 6	@ Laval (Quebec City)
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GOLDEN BEARS BASKETBALL

CANADA WEST CONFERENCE GAMES

GOLDEN BEARS		VS	
Fri Jan 21	8:00 PM	Manitoba	
Sat Jan 22	8:00 PM	Manitoba	
Fri Jan 28	8:00 PM	Winnipeg	
Sat Jan 29	8:00 PM	Winnipeg	
Fri Feb 11	8:00 PM	Calgary	
Sat Feb 12	8:00 PM	Calgary	

CANADA WEST PLAYOFFS

Feb 25 - 27	Quarter Finals
Mar 4 - 5	Final Four

CIS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mar 11 - 12	Round One @ TBD
Mar 11 - 13	@ Halifax

PANDAS BASKETBALL

CANADA WEST CONFERENCE GAMES

PANDAS		VS	
Fri Jan 21	6:00 PM	Manitoba	
Sat Jan 22	6:00 PM	Manitoba	
Fri Jan 28	6:00 PM	Winnipeg	
Sat Jan 29	6:00 PM	Winnipeg	
Fri Feb 11	6:00 PM	Calgary	
Sat Feb 12	6:00 PM	Calgary	

CANADA WEST PLAYOFFS

Feb 25 - 27	Quarter Finals
Mar 4 - 5	Final Four

CIS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mar 11 - 12	Round One @ TBD
Mar 18 - 20	@ Windsor

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WRESTLING

Feb 11 - 12 CW Finals
Feb 25 - 26 CIS Championship
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Jan 15 - 16 Green & Gold Sr. Invitational

TRACK AND FIELD

Jan 21 - 23 Golden Bears & Pandas Open

CURLING

Feb 11 - 13 Western Regional Qualifier



Please stand back from the platform edges

“Next train, Clareview.” The loudspeaker’s call prompts people to shuffle to and fro on the platform, lining up as the train approaches University Station, one of 15 along the LRT line that runs through Edmonton. For most of the past three decades, the light rail system been useful only to a small segment of the population who need to get from Clareview to downtown or the university.

But in the past few years, the LRT has seen a massive, and relatively rapid, expansion into the south end of the city, reaching Southgate Mall and Century Park. And it won’t stop there. The next few months represent an important crossroads for the system. City council will be voting on a number of route proposals that could more than double the length of the system through the city, and triple the number of stations.

“What it came down to is, you can’t continue to sprawl the city out,” said Bob Boutilier, the transportation general manager for the City of Edmonton. “Building more roads means more cars; more cars means more pollution. There are no more roads we can build in the downtown. There’s no faster way to get people through the corridor.”

The newest expansion, slated for completion in April 2014, will be a line from Churchill station to NAIT, connecting all three of Edmonton’s major post-secondary institutions through the LRT line. The new line will cost \$600-700 million to finish, and will add three stations to the system and another 3.3 kilometres of track, eventually ferrying people from NAIT to Health Sciences station, then making the return trip. Travellers looking to go further

south will have to get off and get on a train going down to Century Park.

The city had to work with planners at the new Ipcor Tower to ensure the train could tunnel underneath the new office building and to its destination easily. While \$45 million was spent in the spring of 2008 to construct a corridor under the building, Boutilier estimates the city saved \$140 million in the long run.

According to Boutilier, the work on the North line began to pique the public’s interest in the LRT’s growth.

“Suddenly, public opinion and comments were coming in saying, ‘About time, good to see.’ It really took off from there. It was no longer us in administration trying to push an agenda.”

That public interest could make it easier for city administration to start pushing the other six LRT projects currently in the works.

The centrepiece of this expansion is a line that would extend from Lewis Estates in the city’s west end through downtown and terminate at Mill Woods. It would add as many as 30 new stations to the system, including a new above-ground station between Churchill Square and the Stanley A. Milner Library.

The project is broken down into three parts, with the West line moving from Lewis Estates to MacEwan, and the Southeast line running from Churchill Square to Mill Woods. A connector line through downtown would form the third part of the line. On top of that massive new line, there’s also the possibility of running the LRT past NAIT to just outside St. Albert, as well as extensions of the current line north to Gorman and south to Ellerslie.

All told, LRT expansion costs could run up to \$6 billion. But Boutilier is quick to point out

that that is an all-inclusive number.

“That’s not only the construction. We’ve included property costs, which depending on what city you’re in, can vary. That included the cars and some other things that are added in that are not just track, overhead wire, and stations.”

The new lines may also surprise many Edmontonians used to the train running below ground or, in the case of the northeast line, running along an old CN Rail alignment. Some of the new LRT tracks will run along the centre of the street or directly beside traffic on low-floor cars. The stop at West Edmonton Mall would be on an elevated platform, above the current transit centre.

Boutilier said getting such major projects moving at the same time could save the city money by bundling multiple smaller contracts into a larger lump sum, and hopefully resulting in a better deal with contractors.

The city has already started allocating money for the various projects. The province has also chipped in, with \$800 million coming from the Green Transit Incentives Program. But the federal government has been the sticking point for Boutilier, throwing in what he considers paltry amounts compared to what other municipalities are getting.

“To be quite blunt, the amount of money they’re pouring into Edmonton is quite small. I think of Vancouver’s Canada line ... we’re just not in the ballpark. The city has put up their money. The province has come onboard. But from the federal government, nothing is happening,” explains Boutilier. “It’s a bit frustrating. We expect to see a bit more support.”

Construction on Edmonton’s first LRT line started in 1974, which at the time was the only

city in North America of less than a million people that was building a light rail system. It opened in 1978, in time for the Commonwealth Games, with 6.9 kilometres of track and trains moving people from Belvedere to Central station in what Boutilier describes as an “amusement ride.”

Over the next 14 years, it gradually expanded northwards to Clareview and south across the river to the university. But the track would stall there until 2006 when the Health Sciences station opened.

The current line then kept expanding southwards, up to Century Park station in the city’s south side, which opened in April of last year. Since then, there’s been an explosion of ridership on the line. In 2008, there was an estimated 53,000 people using the system each day; that almost doubled to 94,000 by last November. The city is already moving to upgrade the system to allow for five-car trains, alleviating some of the overcrowding seen on the line during peak hours. New cars ordered for the NAIT line will be put on the existing track, with extras to be ordered.

The numbers seem to speak to Boutilier’s assertion that people are actively demanding, and taking advantage of, better transit in the city. He said the increase in ridership will help make LRT expansion an easier sell to council. But the plans are currently in the hands of city council, who will be making the final call on the programs.

Timelines have also become a political sticking point. The West and Southeast lines were originally supposed to be complete in time for Edmonton’s Expo

Written by
Justin Bell
Photos by
AmirAli Sharifi



2017 bid, but when that fell through, Boutilier said they could be pushed back in order to give them more time. But he said council has asked him to maintain the 2016 timeline.

City Council will be discussing both the Southeast and West LRT lines at the council meeting January 19. Expansion plans for other lines will also be addressed in the next few months, and contracts for the North line should be signed in the spring.

But besides sticking points on stop locations and costs, most councillors seem to be on board.

“[The LRT] is one of my high-priority projects I’ve been pushing since I was first elected,” said Amarjeet Sohi, city councillor for Ward 12. “It is a project we are far behind on.”

Sohi, whose southside riding could benefit greatly of the train’s arrival to Mill Woods, said expanding the LRT is an worthwhile investment.

“It’s a cost avoidance for the future,” said Sohi. “You’re making a long-term investment to avoid future costs, investment in roadways and bridges.”

The new southeast line would take somewhere between 20 to

25 minutes for commuters to reach downtown from Mill Woods. City planners hope some 46,000 people would use the system every day. Combined with the new West line, it would double the number of riders currently using the system, adding another estimated 100,000 people per day.

That improved transit option, said Sohi, is good for residents who can’t afford another car for their household, but who need to get around town anyways.

“People want to have a choice. If we can’t provide an efficient transit system, you are forcing households to buy a second or third car.”

Even recently elected Ward 11 councillor Kerry Diotte, a long-time critic of city spending, wouldn’t criticize the expansion of the LRT. He said he has concerns with some of the details and funding, but overall he thinks people want the extension of transit.

“I think it’s got to be a balancing act between both LRT and roads,” said Diotte. “People want the roads not to be filled with potholes. They want transit to get them places quickly and efficiently, no matter how we do it, be it better bus routes or in the case of LRT, getting LRT up and running to places it’s not.”

He compared the cost of the new southeast

line, estimated to be \$1.25 billion, to what Vancouver got for the new Canada line just prior to the Olympics. That \$2 billion track had multiple skytrain stations over 19.2 kilometres, connecting the city to the airport, and Diotte is still skeptical regarding the cost-benefit ratio of our city’s track, when compared to its West Coast cousin.

“It’s something I would like explained. I haven’t received an explanation [about] how Vancouver can build something superior [for similar cost].”

Adoption of the new LRT lines takes time, considering that it was nearly half a decade for the line to extend from University to Century Park. But if Vancouver is to be used as an example, it could happen quickly. On the Canada line, officials thought they would get 100,000 passengers per day by 2013; they hit the target by March of last year.

That quick adoption in Vancouver could be due to the public’s perception of rail transport. Boutilier said the public will often more readily adopt rail, adding that the sense of permanence lent by the infrastructure also leads to increased development along LRT routes.

“It’s not like a bus route, which you could lose; it’s going to be there. There’s a commitment to invest.”

There’s also the confidence most people feel when taking rail transit over the bus. Boutilier checks his email on his daily commute into the downtown come on the LRT, getting work done as he goes. He also feels more confident the train won’t be held up by traffic or weather.

But for Boutilier, it also comes down to a point of pride.

“When you look around at major cities and you ask the question, ‘What makes a city a great city?’, tell me a city in the world that doesn’t have some type of rail system, subway, or LRT.”

Edmonton could be such a city, according to Boutilier’s metrics. Major metropolises like Paris, London, and New York all have complex rail networks criss-crossing their urban landscapes. Even Calgary’s C-Train has four times the number of passengers and four times the amount of track.

Boutilier said it’s up to city administration to build a good system, one that blankets the city and can get people around quickly and efficiently, in order to entice people to take it. It will be a generation of younger people raised on transit, using their U-Passes, that will push politicians and planners to expand transit in a potentially great city.



Project North West Downtown Southeast Northwest South Northeast

Path

A line will branch off from Churchill station and go underground to MacEwan, emerge above ground and head to NAIT with a stop at Kingsway

Ground-level tracks will run from Lewis Estates to MacEwan’s downtown campus, with a raised platform at West Edmonton Mall above the current transit station

Connecting the West and Southeast lines will be an above-ground line from MacEwan to a new station outside the Stanley A. Milner Library

Crossing the river from downtown, the line will run through Bonnie Doon to Mill Woods

The North line will be extended past NAIT to the city limits near St. Albert

The current line will be extended past Century park to Ellerslie

The current line will be extended past Clareview to Gorman

Timeline

Construction is slated to be completed by April 2014

Sometime in 2016

Sometime in 2016

Sometime in 2016

After 2016

After 2016

After 2016

Cost

\$600 – \$700 million

\$3 billion – \$3.5 billion for entire West, Downtown, and Southeast line

\$1 billion

\$400 million

\$400 million

